

Options for Restructuring the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act

Report with Background Papers and
Focus Group Summary

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MR-1328/1-EDU

Supported by the
U.S. Department of Education

Drug Policy Research Center | RAND

The research described in this report was supported by the U. S. Department of Education under Grant No. S184U990002. Additional support for publication of the report was provided by RAND's Drug Policy Research Center with funding from the Ford Foundation.

ISBN: 0-8330-3016-7

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Published 2001 by RAND

1700 Main Street, P.O. Box 2138, Santa Monica, CA 90407-2138

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PREFACE

This report contains all the outputs of a project undertaken to review the structure and performance of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) and to assess options for strengthening it. As part of this study, a conference was held at which practitioners, researchers, and government officials considered the findings and conclusions presented in three commissioned papers, the proceedings of focus groups of knowledgeable practitioners in two school districts, and a review of the literature describing the program established by SDFSCA and its performance to date. This volume contains the executive summary of the study,¹ the background paper prepared to provide information for the conference participants, a summary of the focus group discussions, and the commissioned papers.

This material should be of interest to federal officials and legislators involved in the impending reauthorization of the SDFSCA, as well as to individuals concerned with the implementation of drug and violence prevention programs in schools. The project was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, and the work was performed within RAND's Drug Policy Research Center.

THE RAND DRUG POLICY RESEARCH CENTER

The Drug Policy Research Center, a joint endeavor of RAND Criminal Justice and RAND Health, was established in 1989 to conduct the empirical research, policy analysis, and outreach needed to help community leaders and public officials develop more effective strategies for dealing with drug problems. The Center builds on a long tradition of RAND research characterized by an interdisciplinary, empirical approach to public policy issues and rigorous standards of quality, objectivity, and independence. The Ford Foundation and other foundations, as well as government agencies, corporations, and

¹This summary is also published separately as *Options for Restructuring the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act*, by Peter Reuter and P. Michael Timpane, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, MR-1328-EDU, 2001.

individuals, support the Center. Dr. Audrey Burnam and Dr. Martin Iguchi codirect the Drug Policy Research Center.

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**OPTIONS FOR RESTRUCTURING THE SAFE AND DRUG-FREE
SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES ACT**

Peter Reuter and P. Michael Timpane

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

This report synthesizes the results of a RAND assessment of the federal Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA), the renewal of which Congress will consider this year. We analyze a proposal submitted by the Clinton administration for reform of the SDFSCA program, and we suggest additional steps that might be taken to improve the program. The Bush administration has also submitted an initial proposal to consolidate the SDFSCA program with the 21st Century Learning Centers program. This proposal places seemingly greater emphasis on safety and violence prevention and on after-school programs, but few details are yet available.

Over the past decade, violence in American schools has declined substantially and persistently to a level that, by many measures, makes schools safer than the other places in which children spend time. Children face a homicide risk of 0.45 per 100,000 person-years in school, compared with 20 per 100,000 person-years outside school (Sherman, 2001). Rates of violent injury, as reported by high school seniors, have fluctuated but have shown no clear trend over the past decade. Nonetheless, intense concern about schools' ability to protect children has been generated by the tragic mass killings at a few schools, in particular, the incident at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. Impressions formed by these incidents have also been exacerbated by evidence of high levels of routine violence against both pupils and teachers in and around many urban schools.

Drug use among high school students is also a cause of continuing concern. In 1986, 5 percent of high school seniors reported having

used marijuana daily in the previous 30 days.¹ That proportion fell steadily through 1992 to 2 percent but then rose again sharply. In 1997, the rate of daily marijuana use among high school seniors reached 6 percent—experimentation with marijuana had again become normative behavior. Use of other drugs has also become more widespread, and some evidence suggests that children are beginning drug use at a younger age. The causes of the changes in drug use remain unknown. While it is clear that shifts in attitude have been the proximate cause of the change in prevalence (Johnston, O'Malley, and Bachman, 1998), there is little understanding of the reasons behind these shifts.

These impressions and trends have contributed to broad political support for the SDFSCA. The Act was passed in 1986 primarily to foster school-based efforts to prevent drug abuse, and funding has been provided for its objectives annually since then. In 1994, violence prevention was added to the Act's stated purposes. Although there are numerous federal government programs aimed at solving problems of youth violence and drug abuse, the SDFSCA is unique in its focus on schools, where it is the principal resource for programs addressing safety, violence, and drug abuse.

The SDFSCA mandates disbursement of money primarily through grants to states, allocated according to population. State education departments receive 80 percent of the funds for disbursement to school districts (see Figure 1); 70 percent of that money is distributed on the basis of student enrollment, and the remaining 30 percent on the basis of need. The governor of each state can disburse the remaining 20 percent of the state's allotment to other organizations that provide prevention activities, such as community organizations or programs serving students with special needs. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) also distributes some discretionary funds under the SDFSCA. These funds, which comprise from 5 to 20 percent of the total disbursed under the Act, are often used for demonstration programs, sometimes in collaboration with other federal agencies such as the Center for Mental Health Services or the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

¹The information in this paragraph is drawn from *Monitoring the Future*, an annual survey of 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students (Johnston, O'Malley, and Bachman, annual).

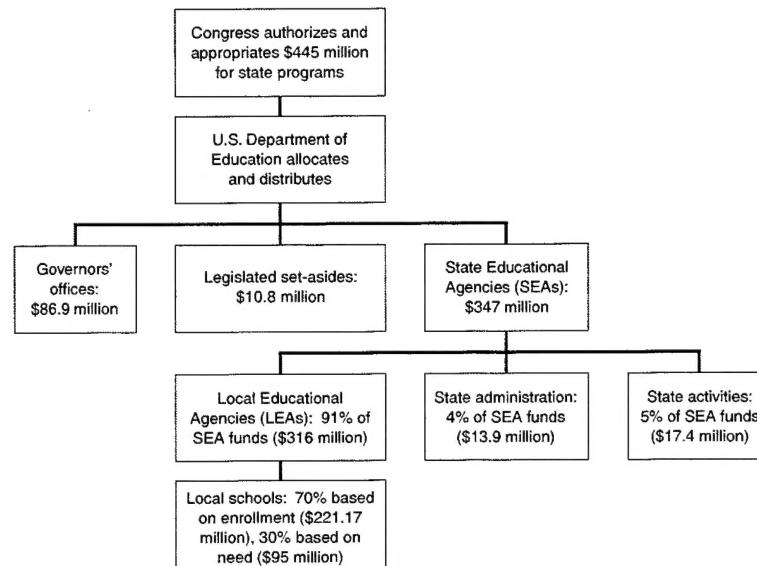


Figure 1—Disbursement of SDFSCA Funds to States, FY 00

Schools use a great variety of methods for preventing drug use and preventing or controlling violence. Curricular offerings are the most common approach, but many schools also provide one-on-one counseling by professionals and peers, as well as recreational, enrichment, and leisure activities; many also set explicit norms and rules for behavior.² In addition, schools invest in policing activities, including the use of metal detectors.

For many years, the SDFSCA program has been criticized widely on both structural and programmatic grounds. Critics charge that the program fails to target high-need communities and schools; provides minuscule levels of per-pupil support and local programs of insignificant size; shows little or no evidence of effectiveness in reducing drug use or violence; and embodies confusion of purposes among drug prevention, violence prevention, and school safety. In addition,

²See Gottfredson (1997) for a recent inventory of approaches.

the program has been accused of serving as a fig leaf for politicians who want to appear to have done something about the problems of drug abuse and violence at schools but who also regularly attack each other across party lines for the program's deficiencies.

To help inform congressional deliberations on the SDFSCA's renewal, the Department of Education asked RAND's Drug Policy Research Center to examine the problems and assess options for improvement. As part of the study, RAND commissioned three analyses of school drug and violence prevention and prepared a background paper describing the history and development of the SDFSCA program. Two focus groups were conducted with teachers and practitioners on the drug and violence problems in their schools and on their experiences with the program in their districts. These activities were preparatory to a two-day conference held in July 1999, which was attended by programmatic and policy leadership from the ED, classroom teachers and local program operators, high-level representatives with drug and violence prevention responsibilities in the departments of Justice and Health and Human Services, and prominent researchers and policy analysts.

The commissioned papers, a summary of the focus groups, and the background paper are included in this volume. The present report draws on those materials as well as the discussions at the conference to present a fresh analytical perspective on the SDFSCA program. Chapter Two examines the program's problems. Chapter Three sets out some criteria for assessing options for reform and uses them to evaluate a reform proposal put forth by the Clinton administration. It also identifies and discusses some further directions in which reform might proceed. Our conclusions are summarized in Chapter Four.

Chapter Two

ASSESSMENT

Many critics agree that the SDFSCA program is deeply flawed and needs restructuring to encourage more-effective programs, efficient oversight, and better targeting of funds.³ This chapter summarizes various issues identified in our literature review or cited by focus group and conference participants. Some of these issues have proved problematic in the SDFSCA program's ability to promote safe, drug-free schools; some constrain programmatic change. The chapter concludes with a brief review of some recent improvements in the program.

BUDGETARY ISSUES

The SDFSCA program's overall problems are reflected in its lack of growth over the past decade. In 1990, the SDFSCA program accounted for more than 5 percent of federal drug control expenditures. While the drug control budget expanded substantially over the next seven years, funding for the program actually decreased—its share of the total fell to less than 3 percent. This is particularly striking in view of bipartisan support for prevention programs and rising levels of overall federal spending on education. The SDFSCA program's share of the total federal drug prevention budget is likewise decreasing, having fallen to 26 percent in 1999, compared to 40 percent in 1991 (Office of National Drug Control Policy, 1999).

³An excellent assessment of the current program is given in Office of National Drug Control Policy Director Barry McCaffrey's testimony before Congress on the Clinton administration's proposal for changes (McCaffrey, 1999).

Because SDFSCA money is distributed at both state and federal levels primarily through enrollment- and population-based formulas, nearly all schools, rich or poor, get something.⁴ As a result, much of the funding goes to districts with modest drug and safety problems or with the means to finance their own efforts. Schools that have serious problems and very constrained budgets receive far too little. Moreover, the current allocation formula spreads the money so thinly (\$8 per student and less than \$10,000 for most districts per year) that program effects can be no more than modest, and local attempts to evaluate the effects are unaffordable. The programs funded by such minuscule amounts are rarely taken seriously by schools.

Federal funding for drug and violence prevention programs under the SDFSCA is not simply a replacement for other sources of revenue, e.g., state or school funding. State-level initiatives have provided limited support, despite the promulgation in 1989 of National Education Goal No. 6 (now No. 7): "By the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning." Many states have legislated extensively against youth violence, especially in the past five years, but these initiatives have rarely focused on schools. The states have generally failed to provide funding for the prevention of school-based violence and drug abuse. Meanwhile, pressures on budgets and other academic performance priorities have made it difficult for either schools or districts to implement prevention activities in the absence of targeted outside support.

It is little wonder, then, that teachers in our focus groups expressed doubts about the continuity of prevention programs at their schools. Even where state allocations to school districts remain reasonably stable, funds for specific programs are regarded as uncertain. As one teacher put it, "We're all in limbo: Are we getting it or are we not getting it? . . . People are asking can I do this next year or can't I do this next year?" This lack of confidence that programs will be funded for the following year undermines planning efforts and program continuity, which in turn must influence program effectiveness.

⁴Formula-based allotment does have the virtue of keeping administrative costs low.

VAGUENESS OF PURPOSE AND GOALS

A fundamental problem identified by focus group and conference participants is a lack of clarity as to the SDFSCA program's goals. Beyond saying that the program should make schools safe and drug free—which is essentially an aspiration rather than a program goal—it is hard to articulate precisely what the program is intended to accomplish.

More specifically, focus group and conference participants found it difficult to see the practical connection between violence and drug abuse. They perceived problems associated with school violence as more pervasive and profound than those involving drug abuse. In their view, low-level violence (verbal abuse, bullying, intimidation, etc.) is widespread and has a serious but mostly hidden negative effect on educational endeavors. Outbreaks of horrifying lethal violence are totally disruptive, but they are rare and not clearly related to these day-to-day patterns. In contrast, illegal drugs are seen as causing problems for fewer students, and the problems are believed to occur more through transactions in or near schools than through use in schools per se. Few study participants see drugs as an important source of violence in their schools.

The federal government is unable to clarify this confusion through allocative priorities because it has no control over the allocation of funds among drug and violence prevention activities at the school-district level. Indeed, the federal government is unable even to identify how much money is going to these two activities. However, given the lack of any clear relationship between drug use and violence in schools, there may be no way that the federal (or state) government could set logically consistent priorities for dealing with both problems.

The federal government could, however, define goals more clearly. The Executive and Legislative branches have both had trouble figuring out what to do with the SDFSCA since its inception—that is, how to turn an aspiration into a program. The program is viewed at the local level as an opportunity to secure funding for a profusion of activities arguably related to drug and violence prevention but really addressing broader social and educational concerns about student behavior. Like most categorical grant programs, the SDFSCA pro-

gram is seen as an entitlement by its recipients, a perception that creates a major obstacle to change.

LACK OF PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

Although the focus group and conference participants saw SDFSCA moneys as supporting prevention activities that are important in many schools, they acknowledged that few systematic data support this belief. The issue of evaluation is a serious one, made more difficult by the ambiguity of program goals. As noted above, the small grants do not provide school districts with enough money to perform evaluations, so little evaluation is done.

It is only fair to state here that the ED has not been idle or negligent in the area of evaluation. The SDFSCA rules for local planning and proposal development, monitoring, and reporting are elaborate. However, by legislative design, the Department has little or no specific enforcement authority beyond that vested by the General Education Provisions Act. As a consequence, its regulatory transactions concern primarily issues of routine compliance (Silvia, Thorne, and Tashjian, 1997). The ED has produced a steady stream of surveys, evaluations, and program guidance intended to clarify and strengthen school programs. However, it has had minimal resources for these activities and has so far been able to provide little evidence of effectiveness, either for policy managers in government or for educators seeking programs for their schools. Monitors at the state level have done little more than process grant applications and ensure that paperwork regulations are complied with; site visits and other forms of review and assistance are rare; and evaluation efforts are actually decreasing.

In the absence of evaluations of school efforts, information on successful models would be helpful. However, the research base on both drug and violence prevention is too limited to provide more than general guidance to schools about what works. The scarcity of demonstrably effective alternatives is one reason for the great popularity of the DARE program, which has in fact demonstrated effec-

tiveness in only one of dozens of evaluations.⁵ Its continued dominance of the market is largely attributable to strong advocacy by local police and support from parents and schools (Gottfredson, 1997). Other programs involving professional and peer counseling have had similarly disappointing evaluation results. A few drug prevention programs, such as Life Skills Training (Botvin et al., 1995) and RAND's Project ALERT (Ellickson, Bell, and McGuigan, 1993) have demonstrated efficacy but have not yet been widely adopted or proven effective in diverse settings. The 2001 report of the ED's Expert Panel on Safe and Drug-Free Schools corroborates this pattern of results, as discussed below. There is even less clarity in the research findings on violence prevention. Few evaluations were conducted before 1995, and only a few interventions have been assessed at all (Samples and Aber, 1998). Conference participants observed that the weakness of the existing knowledge base has inhibited school superintendents and other senior education officials from strongly advocating specific drug and violence prevention activities. There are no interventions behind which they can confidently stand.

As pointed out at the project conference, what little high-quality research has been conducted has focused on curricular interventions. This is consistent with the SDFSCA's historical emphasis on curriculum as the principal funded activity. However, many aspects of a school's activities contribute to the extent of violence and drug abuse, and not all of these can be addressed through formal curriculum. For example, classroom climate (i.e., how a teacher deals with individual students' difficulties or routine disputes among students) may be more important than targeted curricula or programs, but it is difficult to design a funding program that affects such "embedded" activities. As Hawkins, Farrington, and Catalano (1998, p. 210) concluded,

Unfortunately, those concerned about youth violence often do not focus on changing the opportunity and reward structures of classrooms. . . . More typically, schools add a violence prevention curriculum, peer mediation or peer counseling program that seeks to deal with aggressive and violent behavior directly. While these

⁵DARE announced in February 2001 that it will undertake major programmatic changes in response to the negative evaluations.

programs show promise, they are only part of an effective strategy for violence prevention in schools.

The dearth of demonstrably successful models is not the only barrier to successful performance. For example, a study by the Research Triangle Institute reports that "student outcomes were better when prevention programs had greater stability over time, a definition that includes being in place for a long period, with continuity of staff, planning and leadership" (Silvia, Thorne, and Tashjian, 1997). Often, however, the local pattern has been one of inconsistent implementation. Teachers and counselors simply do not have enough time, support, training, or motivation to provide all the instruction or other services and activities that they plan (Silvia, Thorne, and Tashjian, 1997).

The teacher training issue is particularly important. Focus group and conference participants noted that most teachers have little or no preservice training in prevention of drug abuse or violence. Moreover, existing certification requirements and current demands for stronger preparation in academic areas make it unlikely that this situation will change anytime soon. Promoting incorporation of prevention training into teacher education is therefore one way in which the SDFSCA program could have an impact over the next decade. But any such strategy should be launched speedily, given the teacher turnover that will occur during that period. To date, this issue has received very little attention in legislative or program development.

LACK OF COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS

Like many federal categorical programs in education as well as other areas, the SDFSCA program is "stove-piped." That is, there has been very little coordination or collaboration with other education programs (e.g., education for disadvantaged students or programs that support after-school activities) or with related programs in other areas such as juvenile justice or substance-abuse prevention. As a consequence, SDFSCA programs—at the federal, state, and local levels—are not planned for or operated as components of any broader strategic approach to preventing drug abuse and youth violence. To an even greater extent than other educational activities, school-based drug and violence prevention programs would benefit from

being integrated with related activities in mental health, youth development, juvenile justice, and substance-abuse treatment. Yet both the conference and the literature report few instances of systematic collaboration, either among the federal agencies or among the relevant agencies and institutions at the state or local level. It is somewhat encouraging, however, that several of the program's recent initiatives respond to this need (see below).

Equally important, the SDFSCA program has failed to link prevention activities to the educational reform movement. Schools are changing in fundamental ways that make stand-alone behavioral curricula more difficult to integrate into school programs. National educational goals have been promulgated, and standards-based reforms have been enacted in almost every state; they have also been incorporated into major federal programs such as Title I. The alignment of these standards with state and local curricula, professional development programs, and assessments is far advanced. Taken together, these initiatives have been the dominant feature of education policy for the past 15 years. Yet the SDFSCA program has remained isolated from this mainstream of school reform policymaking. Pursuit of the national goal of safe and drug-free schools has been largely unrelated to the pursuit of more prominent, substantive goals in areas such as reading and mathematics. Similarly, efforts to improve the implementation and performance of local SDFSCA programs have not been connected to broader school improvement and professional development strategies.

This lost opportunity is of considerable magnitude, both for those concerned about prevention and for those focused on school reform. It has been evident since the landmark Safe Schools Study of 1978 (Boesal, 1978) that the characteristics of schools dealing successfully with problems of safety and violence are virtually identical to those of schools successfully engaged in academic improvement. These characteristics include clear expectations of student performance, stable and fairly administered norms of behavior, consistent and cooperative patterns of teacher activity, and extensive communication and collaboration with families and the community. Yet there has been little federal or state encouragement or support for local initiatives that bring together the perspectives and resources of school reformers and prevention program developers. This lack of coordinative effort has been unfortunate for both.

Instead of synergy between such purposes, there has been competition. A basic finding of this analysis—which reflects observation, experts' comments, and research—is that, in general, schools do not readily embrace drug and violence prevention activities, even though they nominally support the goals of such activities. The argument that students require a drug-free and safe classroom in order to learn, though eminently reasonable, has not turned out to be programmatically persuasive in the ongoing competition with other educational priorities. Focus group participants reported that the growing pressure on schools to meet standards in core academic subjects has even further reduced schools' willingness to allocate time for activities related to drug-abuse and violence prevention.

In sum, then, the focus group participants saw the SDFSCA program as a categorical program trying awkwardly to deal with a deep, pervasive educational problem: the need to give students the strength and skill to eschew violence and drugs and succeed in school and in life. In the study participants' view, such behavioral issues must be integrally related to academic achievement, not dealt with on the side. Interventions should be truly preventive, rather than designed to deal after the fact with the breakdown of progress and development that violence and drug abuse represent.

RECENT PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS

In recent years, the SDFSCA program has made important strides toward becoming more efficient and effective. It has developed new guidelines emphasizing the need for rigorous assessment, performance objectives, research-based program development, and systematic evaluation. It has helped create and implement a program, jointly sponsored by the ED, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Justice, that provides large comprehensive grants in approximately 75 districts, as well as a junior high school coordinator initiative. Both of these efforts resulted from recent evaluation findings. Finally, it has expanded its attempts to develop joint or coordinated efforts with such other ED programs as Title I and the new 21st Century Learning Centers program supporting expanded after-school activities. It is too soon to gauge the effectiveness of these recent efforts.

Another ED initiative may also prove beneficial to the SDFSCA program. As part of the move to strengthen the knowledge base available to schools, the Department has created an expert panel to identify programs that are effective in reducing drug use and violence.⁶ The panel has asked program developers to submit candidates of two types: (1) classic curriculum offerings, such as DARE, Life Skills Training, or Project ALERT; and (2) a broader set of "policies or practices that maintain safe, disciplined and drug-free environments for students, staff and management" (U.S. Department of Education, Expert Panel on Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools, 1999, p. 4). The panel published its first report in January 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Of 132 programs it received to evaluate, the panel classified nine as exemplary and 33 as promising. It is worth noting that the most popular program, DARE, was not rated as either exemplary or promising. Of those deemed to be exemplary, only two target violence in school, two are specific to illicit substances only (alcohol and tobacco), and all but two are school-based. Although the number of exemplary programs is distressingly small, the panel's work provides a basis for systematically upgrading prevention activities.

⁶This is one of four such panels; the others focus on educational technology, gender equity, and mathematics and science education. Program developers are invited to present their products, along with outside evaluations, to the panels. Using specified criteria, the panels evaluate the programs, and those judged to be exemplary or promising will be disseminated broadly.

Chapter Three

CHANGING THE PROGRAM

The SDFSCA program was developed in response to a crisis, without any articulated theory of how the response would work its way through the federal system and ameliorate that crisis. This situation persists—the program is related to its goals only at the rhetorical level. This chapter presents our criteria for an effective program, followed by an evaluation of the Clinton administration's proposal for program reform (the only detailed plan yet offered) and a set of directions that further reforms might take.

CRITERIA FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

A redesigned SDFSCA program should be judged primarily in terms of the following six criteria:

- *Targeting of resources.* Does the program allocate an appropriately large share of the funds to schools with the most serious problems and few resources of their own?
- *Effectiveness in reducing drug use and violence in schools.* How much do the program's expenditures decrease students' use of drugs and violence in and around schools? Are funds being spent on proven program models that are effectively implemented?
- *Evaluability.* Can the federal government assess how effectively the money is being spent?
- *Accountability.* Can the federal government track what is being done with program funds? Can the Department of Education

determine the extent to which the programs it funds increase school safety and reduce violence and drug use?

- *Improvement of program capacity.* To what extent has the program increased the quality and range of available school interventions? Are new approaches encouraged? Does the program commission or carry out the research, evaluation, and data collection needed to strengthen programs for preventing drug abuse and violence? Does it support appropriate training of teachers and more-active leadership by senior educational officials?
- *Administrative feasibility and cost.* Are the requirements of the program compatible with the managerial and administrative capabilities of schools? How much must be spent by the schools and all levels of government to meet reporting and evaluation requirements? Do administrative costs at all levels of government remain low?

THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION PROPOSAL

In August 1999, the Clinton administration announced its proposal for changing the structure of the SDFSCA program (McCaffrey, 1999). The proposal first acknowledges many of the criticisms of the current program, emphasizing that most of the problems cited are structural flaws in the existing legislation rather than implementation failures on the part of the ED. The proposal recommends that districts be required to produce substantive grant proposals and that states develop a formal evaluation process that includes comparisons of those proposals. The criteria to be used for awards include the level of risk of the school district's population and the district's fiscal capacity. The language of the proposal suggests that about half of all districts would receive awards.

This proposal, which calls for a competitive, targeted allocation process, should ensure that schools use only proven programs and should provide schools with strong incentives to implement these programs effectively. It should also do a better job of directing the funds to those students most in need of prevention programs. Finally, emphasis is given to the need to provide large enough grants to make a difference. With respect to our criteria for a successful pro-

gram, this proposal appears to rate highly in terms of accountability, evaluability, and potential program effectiveness. It also moderately improves targeting (see Table 1).

Table 1
Evaluation of the Clinton Administration Proposal

Criterion	Rating
Improves effectiveness	+
Better targets resources	?
Improves accountability	+
Promotes evaluability	+
Is administratively feasible, keeps costs low	-
Improves program capacity	0

The proposal clearly does less well in terms of administrative feasibility and cost. State governments will have to develop a proposal-evaluation capability, and the school districts will need to have new proposal-writing capabilities. Unless the competition is structured so that only a modest percentage of districts receive funds, the average grant will be too small to justify this process for most districts. At present, the median grant is barely \$10,000; even if only one-third of the districts received grants under the proposed competitive process, most grants would still amount to less than \$30,000. It would scarcely be worth the effort to prepare competitive proposals for such small grants or to conduct the required evaluations (which would also be a component of the proposed program). One-quarter to one-half of the total funds could be needed to cover administrative costs, including those of evaluation. If, alternatively, states concentrated their program funds among larger school districts with significant problems, evaluation and proposal preparation would require a much smaller share of the awards. However, decisions to concentrate funding at the state level are just as unlikely as are such decisions at the federal level.

The Clinton administration's proposal also places heavy reliance on the fragile research base discussed above. High-quality evaluations are few, and the initial work of the ED's expert panel to identify proven and promising programs encountered both substantive and procedural problems. The SDFSCA program is, for example, beset with conflict about the evidence in support of DARE, yet it would be

politically foolhardy to suggest a program design requiring many, if not most, districts to give up a curricular approach with such strong support from parents and police. Also, as discussed above, it is inherently particularly difficult to evaluate those dispersed features of school management and activity that influence school safety and drug use. It is likely that the programs that are easiest to evaluate will most readily pass muster (Gottfredson, 1997).

Finally, the Clinton administration's proposal does not contain the building blocks for systematic long-term program improvement. Most major federal programs in education and other policy areas supplement their formula grant programs with an array of capacity-building activities, e.g., in programmatic research, demonstration, teacher preparation, and evaluation. Until recently, the SDFSCA program has had no such capacity for improvement, and it still has very little. The program provides no money for teacher training or research, nor is such authority included in the Clinton administration's proposal.⁷ Little use has been made of the ED's general authority for research (the Office for Educational Research and Improvement) or for program management and evaluation (the General Education Provisions Act) to improve the SDFSCA program. These authorities reserve no resources for the program, and they make no provisions for coordination among research, training, and operational support for it.

DEVISING ALTERNATIVES

Given that the Clinton administration's proposal, while an improvement, is insufficient, what further action might be taken? One option would be to abandon the SDFSCA program in its present form. Should it be limited to violence prevention? That seems more related to schools' core mission of providing effective education than does drug prevention. But the history of the program, rooted in the crack crisis and sustained by the continuing "War on Drugs," keeps the focus on drugs. Political gridlock within and among the levels and

⁷The National Institute on Drug Abuse and the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention fund research on drug prevention; the National Institute on Mental Health and the Office for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention fund research on violence prevention.

branches of government may ensure maintenance of the status quo. In this light, given its inattention to coordination and accountability and the lack of evidence of its effectiveness, the SDFSCA program seems fundamentally irremediable.

The argument in favor of abandoning the SDFSCA program, however, is based only on the politics of the program's origin and continuation. The argument may indeed be persuasive, but signs of progress in the program call for serious consideration of its retention. Steps in the right direction include increased collaboration with other federal programs aimed at helping youth with a variety of behavioral problems and a new focus on the middle school. That the political climate may be changing is also suggested by congressional willingness to give a larger share of funds to federally controlled discretionary programs. The SDFSCA program's long-time, politically driven block-grant character may be gradually superseded by genuine expectations and requirements for targeted, effective action.

If continuation is judged desirable, reform should go beyond the steps proposed by the Clinton administration.⁸ The criteria listed at the beginning of this chapter suggest three major dimensions of change: the way funds are allocated within states (assuming that interstate allocations are not likely to change⁹), the means by which the federal government enhances the content of programs, and the methods by which program performance is judged.

Funding Formulas

There are several ways that allocation protocols could be revised to further the Act's purposes:

- To enhance quality and allow more demonstration programs, more discretion could be shifted to the ED. Although Congress did provide the Department substantially more discretionary

⁸The Bush administration's proposal for reform of the SDFSCA program suggests performance-based grants, but only in the most general fashion.

⁹Congress could attempt to improve targeting across states to take account of differences in state problems and resources, as it does with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Block Grant. Such formulas require large quantities of data, however, as well as political courage (Burnam et al., 1997).

funds in 1999 (\$80 million out of \$550 million), the program remains primarily formula driven.

- A formula could be used that assures that schools serving poor communities and enrolling children at higher victimization risk receive substantially higher per-pupil awards.
- A minimum grant size could be established, thus excluding or redirecting some district efforts.
- Matching or other requirements for state and local contributions could be implemented.
- A competitive grant process within states could be required.

These alternatives are not mutually exclusive. For example, a higher share of appropriations could be set aside for federal discretionary grants, with the remaining moneys being used to fund state-run competitive grants in which district or student needs play a role. A requirement for matching funds would expand targeted resources at both the state and the local level. If some small districts no longer qualified for awards because of a grant minimum, they could be encouraged (as they have been by the Federal Vocational Education program since 1994) to form consortia of small districts; such consortia are already permitted and used by some districts (U.S. Department of Education, 1994). Alternatively, small districts that succeed in presenting evidence of proven effectiveness in their use of SDFSCA funds could be exempted from newly established minimums.

Determining Content

Three general strategies could be used to enhance the content of programs. They are listed here in descending order of coerciveness:

- Acceptable approaches could be listed, and funds could be limited to those on the list.
- Performance standards could be set, with the means by which these are achieved left to the school districts.

- Guidelines could be provided and information disseminated to schools, with the choice of funded activity left entirely to the districts and schools.

These options reflect differing views about the relative competence of different levels of government to make these kinds of decisions. The first option, centralizing the listing of acceptable programs, creates a bureaucratic process that may stifle innovation but assures a minimum level of quality. The second option sets performance standards, but such standards are difficult to enforce, given the complexity and expense of outcome measurement. However, if combined with requirements for regular public release of state and local results, performance standards might build popular pressure for improvement. The third option, providing guidelines, is close to the status quo and is perceived to have been generally ineffective, perhaps because the guidelines have seldom been monitored. A basic problem with all of these choices is that each assumes a level of reliable knowledge that is not currently in view.

Evaluation

Accountability is a concern throughout the federal government. It refers to the ability to show not merely that funds have been properly spent but that they have accomplished worthwhile results. Evaluation can be carried out in a variety of fashions ranging from assessment of the performance of each individual grant (to assure that funds were spent appropriately) to review of the overall national performance of the program. Evaluation also can be used for a number of purposes, including learning what works, rewarding high-performing grantees, and assessing the returns on investment of public moneys.

Formal evaluation of individual SDFSCA grants could be particularly challenging. It could, for example, require that schools conduct surveys of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use, as well as develop indicators for the levels of violence in the community. Defining and measuring the many subtle program influences and outcomes would require considerable sophistication and expense.

Chapter Four

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BROAD ASPECTS REQUIRING FURTHER ATTENTION

The Clinton administration's legislative proposal deals realistically with several of the SDFSCA program's problems and opportunities for improvement. Steps in the right direction include provisions for targeting, state review of competitive grants, and collaboration in both demonstration grants and local proposal development. However, we believe that these recommendations could be made more systematic and ambitious. Drawing from observations on the design and redesign of similar federal education programs for improved performance, we suggest two broad aspects of the SDFSCA program that require further attention: the program's mission and its allocation philosophy.

Program Mission

The SDFSCA program's mission and purposes are largely historical and political. The program does not share the direct equal-educational-opportunity purposes of such programs as Title I or the Individuals with Disabilities programs, nor does it share the economic-development purpose of vocational education. It was created, rather, as the school-based segment of a larger national campaign against drug use and abuse, with little reference to other educational programs or priorities.

The SDFSCA program is a large one in the context of federal spending on K-12 education. It is one of the largest ED programs and the

largest started since the creation of such major programs as those created by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Through a congeries of small categorical programs, the Department provides funding for almost every form of educational activity that occurs in most school districts, but the funding is typically at token levels, intended to provide endorsement and symbolic leadership. At \$550 million to \$600 million per year, the SDFSCA level of funding transcends symbolism. The program should have specific, measurable objectives for every level of government and the means to ensure that they are being achieved. The program's political significance should be reflected in the Department's national leadership ("bully pulpit") actions. Where the ED has taken emerging national concerns seriously, in such disparate arenas as nationwide standards and assessments, reading improvement, and religious expression in public schools, it has been effective at mobilizing dialogue and highlighting consensus for initiative. The ED could develop such a campaign around themes of drug and violence prevention and thus augment the work of the SDFSCA program.

The combination of drug-abuse and violence prevention missions in a single program should also be reconsidered. These two problems are not clearly related in either cause or cure. The assumptions about common antecedents are probably incorrect: Much violence is rooted in family and community problems, independent of drug use or distribution. Moreover, even if drug abuse and violence share common roots or strong connections, the solutions to the two problems may require different approaches. For example, drug use may best be addressed through specific curricula, and violence through classroom climate changes and disciplinary policies.

At every level, program managers make decisions about whether to emphasize drug-abuse or violence prevention, resulting in arbitrary patterns of activity and resource allocation. Currently, drug prevention is reported to be losing resources to violence prevention and safety programs in this zero-sum process—not an intended outcome. It is worth considering whether the two purposes should be separated, either within the SDFSCA program or by dropping violence prevention from the program and creating a companion program.

Allocation Philosophy

The problems encountered in the operation of the SDFSCA program are not unique in either the federal government or the ED. Modern federalism is broadly concerned with distributing federal moneys to lower-level government units for the purpose of ensuring that good programs are implemented effectively and that those units most in need of services get the most funding. This ambition has only been made more urgent by the passage of the Government Performance Review Act (GPRA). Most federal programs overlap with other federal programs, and coordination is difficult to achieve. The high cost of evaluation and the weakness of the research base in the prevention field accentuate the difficulty of assuring effective local activities, but these problems are not outside the range of other federal program experience.

Other major education programs sharing some of these features have gradually developed adequate allocation mechanisms. For example, the Federal Vocational Education program¹⁰ disburses relatively large sums (\$1.15 billion in 1999) to improve the workforce skills of young persons entering the labor market.¹¹ Long criticized for an allocation formula that disbursed moneys too broadly and failed to reward performance, the legislation was amended in 1990 to allow for more-targeted expenditures (U.S. Department of Education, 1994). Fewer schools now receive larger sums of money, and the schools that do are more likely to be in poorer districts and to serve students who need and can benefit from vocational education. Small school districts are encouraged to form consortia for purposes of proposal submission.

One important lesson from the reform of the Perkins Act is that it is possible to restructure a program that has previously been treated as a school or organizational entitlement. Such restructuring may take time—several reauthorizations and mandated national evaluations

¹⁰Currently authorized by the Carl D. Perkins Vocational-Technical Education Act Amendments of 1998 (P.L. 105-332).

¹¹Furthermore, in a notable historical parallel, the 1917 Smith-Hughes Act virtually created the field of vocational education, much as the SDFSCA aspires to create a prevention field.

from 1963 to 1994 were required in the case of vocational education—but it can be done, politically and programmatically.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the preceding perspectives and our proposed criteria, we believe the following three alternative avenues for change would each remedy the SDFSCA program's problems at least as well as the changes proposed by the Clinton administration. These changes seem compatible with the Bush administration's objectives as well.

1. *Change the within-state allocation formula to give much more weight to need and capacity of districts.* Districts or consortia of small, low-need districts would apply for state grants. States would pass the funds through to eligible grantees noncompetitively. Grants would meet or exceed a minimum level of dollars per student (or school) to ensure that schools could implement meaningful programs. Not all funded programs would be evaluated, but a sample would periodically be chosen for evaluation.
2. *Change the basic character of the program, replacing formula grants to states with direct federal grants.* Grants would be given to a much smaller number of school districts, which would serve as models for others in the nation. This approach has been adopted by other federal education programs, such as the program for educational technology and, to a considerable extent, the bilingual education program. The problems of violence and drug use among school children are so pervasive that the approximately \$600 million in SDFSCA funds can account for only a small share of the total resources needed. By making the SDFSCA program a demonstration program, Congress would be recognizing the distinctive role and capacity of the federal government in demonstrating models that states and localities could adopt and fund.
3. *Create requirements for state and local efforts.* The SDFSCA program could offer matching grants, as is done for vocational education, or require a comprehensive state-funded program as a condition for federal contribution, as is done for IDEA. In both of these cases, state and local contributions have secured support for program goals, surpassed the federal contribution several times over, and created nearly universal opportunities for students with needs

addressed by the programs. Only substantially increased state and local efforts could possibly enable total governmental resources to cover all serious needs.

For any of these three alternatives, the federal government must furnish the SDFSCA program with an array of capacity-building authorities. The program should designate funds for research to be carried out through the ED's Office of Educational Research and Improvement or through other agencies such as the National Institute on Drug Abuse or the National Institute of Justice. The program should also have the authority to make sustained investments in training activities for both new and experienced teachers. Comprehensive national evaluations should be scheduled to provide the federal government with reliable information about program successes and problems, timed to contribute to deliberations concerning reauthorization.¹²

Finally, considering the lack of communication and coordination among programs and levels of government, the Department should take the lead in regularly convening federal, state, and local officials for the explicit purpose of enhancing collaboration among *all* related school-based prevention programs, not just those supported by the SDFSCA program.

CONCLUDING COMMENT

The current SDFSCA program structure is almost universally considered to be profoundly flawed; we are unaware of anyone who will explicitly defend it. However, the problems addressed by the program are so serious and widespread that the federal government cannot reasonably abandon its commitment. Unfortunately, there are few proposals for reform. The Clinton administration's proposal addresses some but not all of the ways in which the program could be improved. If the SDFSCA program is to survive and flourish, it must become more demonstrably effective at reducing school-related drug use and violence.

¹²The SDFSCA program might be an ideal candidate for experimentation with interactive, Internet-based schemes for program monitoring and assessment.

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CHARACTERISTICS AND CHALLENGES OF THE SAFE AND DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES ACT: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Mina Kimmerling

The tragedy at Columbine High School and similar incidents across the nation have increased concern over violence in America's schools. This heightened awareness has focused attention on the policies and programs intended to prevent violence, drug use, and other threats to safety in America's K-12 education system. This report discusses the nation's largest school safety program, the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA). Created by Congress in 1986 as the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (DFSCA), this program was reauthorized in 1994 as SDFSCA. In fiscal year 2000 (FY 00), it disbursed a total of \$605 million and involved 40 million students in 97 percent of the nation's schools. SDFSCA is the most frequently used federal source of funds for practices related to schoolwide discipline and violence prevention. It is currently in the process of reauthorization.

This report is not an evaluation of the SDFSCA program. Several such evaluations have been conducted, including 1997 analyses by the Research Triangle Institute and the Government Accounting Office (GAO). Rather, this report presents an overview of the program's structure, history, and major challenges. The increasing concern over drug use and violence in schools has shown the need for school reform efforts to target issues beyond academic achievement. Additionally, aligning the goals of drug and violence prevention programs with school reform initiatives may improve the effectiveness of program implementation. Only when prevention programs are seen as integral for school evolution rather than as mandated activities that detract from schools' central mission will the achievement of safe and drug-free schools be a priority in education.

To explore these issues, the U.S. Department of Education asked RAND to convene a conference of drug and violence prevention researchers, practitioners, and educational reformers. Participants were asked to consider how the SDFSCA program might be made more effective and, more broadly, how efforts aimed at decreasing student drug use and school

violence could best incorporate the national focus on school reform and accountability. This report was prepared to provide a shared knowledge base for the conference participants; it presents key information about the program's history, operational structure, implementational practices, past performance (as measured by various assessments), and proposed changes. Primary and secondary sources were used to obtain this information, as well as one-on-one interviews with U.S. Department of Education and Department of Justice officials, policymakers, drug and violence prevention researchers, and education researchers. In addition, RAND conducted two focus groups in which school principals, administrators, and teachers from a suburban district and a large urban district discussed the feasibility of SDFSCA program implementation and barriers to its effectiveness.

With a large funding base, data to support its necessity, and a structure that allows schools to individualize resources to meet local needs, in addition to the public's attention and desire for implementation, SDFSCA seems to have the key ingredients that would enable it to have a significant impact. Nevertheless, when assessing the program's effectiveness, legislators are doubtful, researchers are critical, and educators are displeased. Problems with legislation and integration with school reform have hampered a potentially potent program. The points of contention that impede the SDFSCA program's functional efficiency include program creation versus program responsibility, the laissez-faire nature of program guidelines versus the increasing demand for program accountability, the focus on research-based methods in policymaking rather than ease and practicality of program implementation by teachers and principals, and the shifting focus of school reform toward safety and prevention rather than the exclusive pursuit of rigorous academic standards.

In view of these tensions, many would conclude that a new approach is needed. A shift in the definition and focus of school-based drug prevention to include school reform efforts and interagency collaboration may bridge the gap between the goals of public policy and the reality of implementation. This report sets forth these issues,

along with recommendations for improvements to the SDFSCA legislation, its implementation, and its integration with other programs, as well as more-general prevention policies.

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of Education's SDFSCA is the primary federal program supporting school-based efforts to prevent drug abuse and violence among America's young people. According to a 1998 evaluation of elementary and secondary school principals' utilization of government funding, local funding, and private funding, SDFSCA was the most frequently used source of funds for practices related to schoolwide discipline (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). When principals were asked about the role SDFSCA funds play in maintaining safety, orderliness, and proper behavior in their schools, 77 percent reported that these funds "made a difference," "made a big difference," or were "essential" (U.S. Department of Education, 1999).

SDFSCA has been a consistent component of the federal government's ongoing efforts to combat drugs and violence through school and community-based prevention programs. When DFSCA was reauthorized in 1994 as SDFSCA--part of the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), an omnibus bill reauthorizing core federal education programs--the reauthorizing legislation was expanded to focus on violence prevention and school safety.

Total funding for the program began at \$200 million in FY 87 and grew fairly steadily until FY 93, when funding levels began to decrease. This decrease continued until FY 97, when appropriations were increased by \$100 million. Current funding is sizable, \$605 million for FY 00 (Figure 1). Funds are allocated to states on the basis of school population. In FY 99, state grants ranged from \$1.7 million (Alaska, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Maine, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Dakota, Rhode Island, Vermont, Wyoming, and the District of Columbia) to \$39.5 million (California). The average state award was \$10 million. States distribute the funds to school districts on the basis of student population and district characteristics, such as perceived need for prevention programs. The average district receives roughly \$6 per student, but 59 percent of the districts--those that are small--receive grants of less than \$10,000 (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). Per-pupil spending may be higher than this in

districts that choose to concentrate their program resources on a particular age group, such as middle-school students.

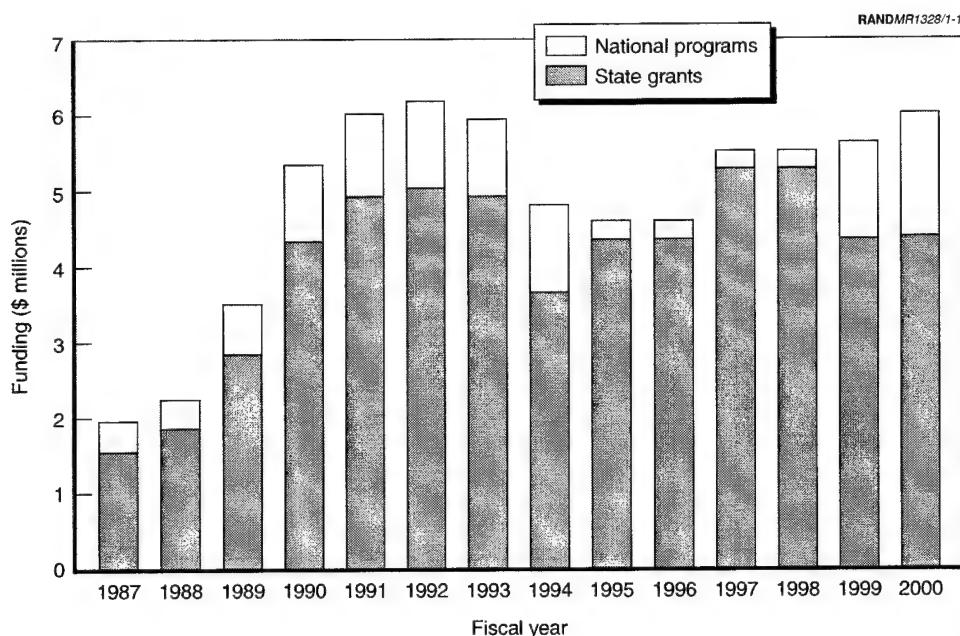


Figure 1--Funding for Safe and Drug-Free Schools Programs, 1987-2000

Perceived Political Factors in the Creation and Development of the SDFSCA Program

The creation of the SDFSCA program can be attributed, at least in part, to national perceptions of a crack cocaine "epidemic" during the mid 1980s. School- and community-based drug prevention was perceived by both government officials and the general public as a way to address the increasing problem of drug use by America's youth. However, the legislative mandate to create school-based programs to counter the spread of drugs lacked strong substantive underpinnings. Because the SDFSCA program was created as a response to a perceived emergency, the responsibility for school programs fell to local districts. The legislation provided few clear guidelines and little capacity for monitoring and enforcement. The resulting flexibility in program structure and the lack of political leadership have caused public and governmental perceptions of the program to continually wax and wane.

Throughout the program's 13-year history, leaders espousing a broad range of political perspectives have both attacked it and taken credit for its accomplishments.

Converging Legislative Focus

The broadened scope of the program following the 1994 reauthorization seems to have been driven by a nationwide perception of an increasing level of school violence. The general public saw drug use and violence as related issues. The 1994 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes reported that the public found the increase in fighting, violence, gangs, and poor discipline to be the most serious problems facing U.S. public schools (Elam, Rose, and Gallup, 1994). The poll also found that the public believed the main causes of the perceived increase of violence in the nation's schools were the increased use of drugs and alcohol (Elam, Rose, and Gallup, 1994). Each year about 3 million thefts and violent crimes--nearly 16,000 incidents per school day--occur on or near school campuses. In 1994, about one in five high school students regularly carried a firearm, knife, razor, club, or other weapon (Government Accounting Office, 1995). Although the problem of safety and violence in schools was clearly receiving greater public recognition, the actual number of arrests for violent crimes had not significantly increased. Nonetheless, parents and school administrators were clearly interested in integrating violence prevention education into the existing drug prevention curriculum.

Policy leaders, too, began to increase their focus on school safety. This was reflected not only in the creation of SDFSCA, but in other federal legislation as well. In 1994, President Clinton signed into law Goals 2000, encompassing a set of eight National Goals originally created in 1989 by the President and the 50 state governors. The explicit intention of Goals 2000 was to establish "world class" national education standards. One of the national goals specifically targeted safety and drug prevention, underscoring the role of SDFSCA. The seventh goal called for all schools in America to be free of drugs and violence and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and to offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning by the year

2000. Though clearly exhortatory rather than feasible, this goal was also reflected in the Department of Education's Strategic Plan, which stated that schools were to become strong, safe, disciplined, and drug free. Recognition of the need for safe and drug-free schools as part of national educational goals reflected not only an understanding of the problem, but also the realization that a safe school environment is necessary if schools are to achieve academic goals.

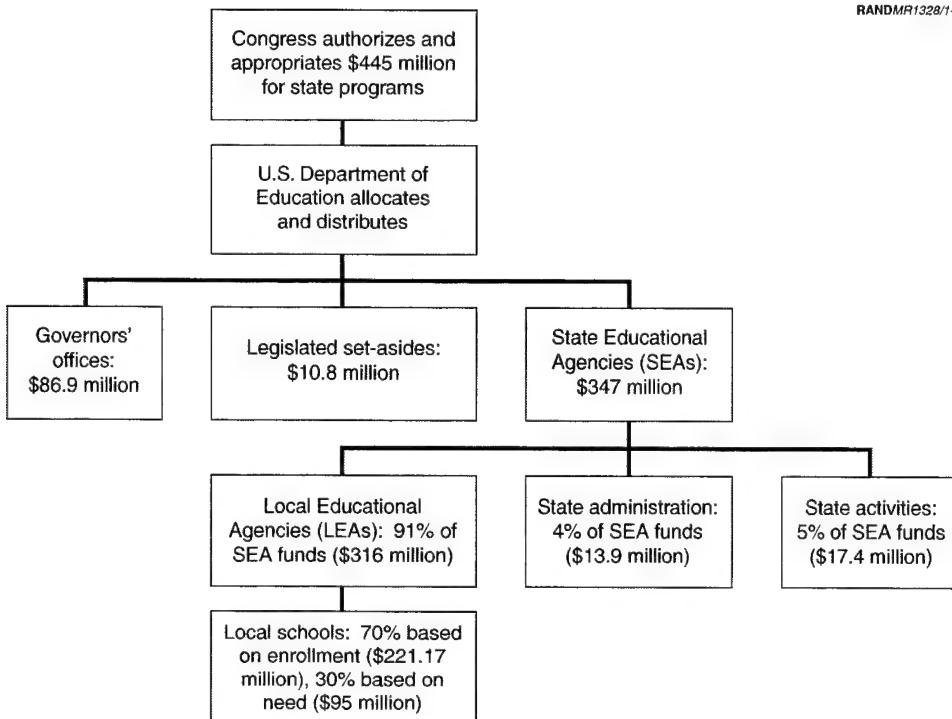
FUNDING PATTERNS AND PROCESSES

SDFSCA funds are distributed through two major programs, the State Grants program and the National Programs. The majority of program funds are disbursed through the State Grants program, which makes separate allocations to the State Education Agencies (SEAs) and to the governors' offices. SEA funds flow to local districts according to a formula based on enrollment and need for prevention programming. Governors' program funds go to local grantees, which are primarily community groups and organizations. Figure 2 delineates the current path of funding streams, using 1995-1996 allocation figures (Government Accounting Office, 1997b).

From the State to the Districts

According to the current legislative formula, the SEAs receive 80 percent of the total amount allocated to the state. Although the districts must officially apply for funds, the state designates money for Local Education Agencies (LEAs), using a formula that is 70 percent enrollment-based and 30 percent need-based. Two-thirds of the states base their high-need allocation decision on rates of student alcohol and drug use, arrests, expulsions, or suspensions from school, and rates of school violence and vandalism (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). The local agencies, in turn, have broad discretion in choosing which schools will receive funding and in deciding how program funds will be used to prevent drug abuse and violence and to promote safety. SDFSCA requires districts applying to the state agency for funds to include in their application "a detailed explanation of the local educational agency's

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**Figure 2--Disbursement of Funds
(based on FY 2000 expenditures of \$445 million to state educational agencies)**

comprehensive plan for drug and violence prevention," including the district's goals, funding plan, community coordination efforts, and coordination efforts with other federal, state, and local sources. Programs must be comprehensive (designed for all students and employees) and designed "to prevent use, possession and distribution of tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drugs, to prevent violence and promote school safety, or to create a disciplined environment conducive to learning" (U.S. Department of Education, 1999).

A small percentage of state funds are designated to support federally funded program coordinators, whose job is to give technical assistance to districts and to oversee district activities. Legislation allows for schools and districts to use funds for a wide range of activities, including comprehensive drug prevention, health education, early intervention, student mentoring and rehabilitation referral programs, sexual-harassment prevention programs, conflict management,

and expenditures for metal detectors and crime- and drug-free school routes.

From the State to the Governors' Programs

The governors' programs receive 20 percent of the funds allocated to each state. Ten to twenty percent of the governors' program funds must go to law-enforcement/education partnerships, in which the efforts of local educational agencies are combined with those of law-enforcement agencies. Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) is the principal program funded under this provision. Whereas the LEAs allocate program funds primarily to school-based activities, the governors' programs largely support grants or contracts to community and nonprofit agencies providing prevention programs for children who are not normally served by schools or who have special needs (e.g., preschoolers, youth in juvenile detention facilities, runaway or homeless children, pregnant and parenting teenagers, and school dropouts). Federally authorized activities range from setting up after-school recreational and cultural programs that encourage a drug-free lifestyle to training parents and other members of the community in prevention.

From the U.S. Department of Education to National Programs

SDFSCA also provides resources for National Programs. These funds are distributed at the discretion of the Department of Education rather than through a block-grant process. The role of the National Programs is to fund local activities, disseminate information at the state and local levels, and emphasize coordinated interagency programs. Through different phases of the program's history, allocations for the National Programs have ranged from 5 percent to 22 percent of the total SDFSCA budget. As Figure 1 illustrates, after an initial period of comparatively high allocations to the National Programs, Congress sharply limited such spending between FY 95 and FY 98. Interagency coordination and spending increased in 1999, and spending on National Programs increased significantly, to 22 percent of the SDFSCA yearly budget.

Beginning in FY 99, the Department of Education, with Congressional support, committed \$95 million to two new efforts. First, \$35 million

was allocated for creating full-time middle-school prevention-program-coordinator positions. Then the remaining \$60 million was combined with \$35 million from the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services to implement a "Safe Schools, Healthy Students" program. Under this program, 54 competitive grants are awarded to districts that promote "safe and drug-free learning environments." This initiative requires applicants to show that they are using research-based programs to address the problems of drugs and violence in schools.

The Local Perspective

Although the SDFSCA program is the primary provider of school-based prevention funding, it is only one of a number of federally funded programs for substance-abuse and violence prevention. A 1998 audit by the Education Department's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) found that 12 out of 26 districts surveyed reported using local funds to supplement prevention program expenses. Districts have also tapped into the plethora of federally funded drug and violence prevention programs. As Figure 3 shows, in 1996, 13 federal departments administered a total of 66 substance-abuse and violence prevention programs. Although most of these programs do not focus solely on elementary- and secondary-school-based interventions, schools often apply for funds from them. Because a large number of programs have apparently similar goals, many federal funding sources have come under criticism for lack of coordination with other agencies, leading to charges of duplication, excessive spending, and wastefulness (Government Accounting Office, 1997c).

Even within schools and districts, there is substantial variety in the types of prevention activities utilized. According to one prevention expert, "School principals were asked to identify whether or not their school used activities in any of 14 distinct categories of prevention efforts. On average, they reported using prevention efforts that fell into 9 of the 14 different categories" (Denise Gottfredson in U.S. Department of Education, 1999).

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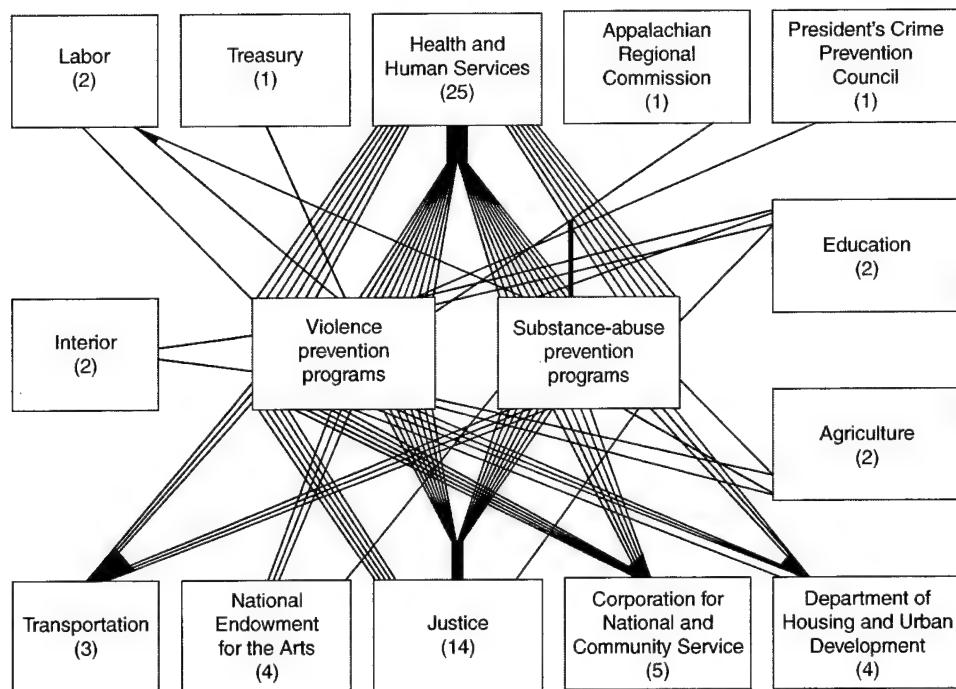


Figure 3--Federal Departments and Agencies Administering Drug and violence Prevention Programs in FY 96

Issues of Accountability

Issues of accountability have arisen throughout SDFSCA's history, perhaps due to the high level of discretion local and school officials have over funding and the resulting wide range of program variation, even within a single district. The legislation allows for state, district, and school prevention programs to vary substantially, which makes it difficult to develop intervention accountability systems or to monitor long-term effectiveness. The average SDFSCA program budget of \$6 to \$10 per student leaves little room for funding both program and evaluation activities.

Nevertheless, accountability measures have been implemented from the federal to the programmatic level. The 1994 SDFSCA legislation mandated four mechanisms to increase accountability:

- An application process that requires approval of state and local program plans.
- Monitoring activities by state agencies.
- Triennial reports and evaluations.
- The use of substate regional advisory councils.

Additional changes to SDFSCA program requirements have encouraged schools to evaluate their proposed prevention programs by using scientifically objective research. The 1998 Principles of Effectiveness are regulatory guidelines created by the Department of Education to ensure that SDFSCA funds go only to reliable prevention programs. For example, the 1997 Research Triangle Institute evaluation found that few districts seemed to know about or consider research findings when planning their prevention programs, and that prevention approaches that have been shown to be effective were not widely used (Silvia, Thorne, and Tashjian, 1997). Although compliance is not a legislative requirement, the Department of Education has made abiding by these principles mandatory for all recipients of SDFSCA funds. The Principles of Effectiveness, derived through examining evaluation results and long-standing ideas on how to improve program effectiveness, include the following stipulations:

- Programs must be based on a thorough assessment of objective data about the drug and violence problems that exist in the local schools and community.
- Programs must have the assistance of a local or regional advisory council that includes community representatives; they must establish measurable goals and objectives; and they must design activities accordingly.
- Activities must be based on research or evaluation that provides evidence that the strategies used prevent or reduce drug use, violence, or disruptive behavior.
- Programs should be evaluated periodically to assess progress toward achieving goals and objectives. Evaluation results

should be used to refine, improve, and strengthen program goals and objectives as appropriate.

This new research-based focus is designed to integrate evaluative findings and improve program effectiveness, outcomes, and accountability.

Accountability at the state level has been emphasized through the Department of Education's use of triennial self-reports that assess local program effectiveness. Additionally, when applying to the state agency for program funding, districts must submit a plan ensuring that funds will be spent in compliance with program guidelines. Because the scope of acceptable programs is so broad, varying from sexual-harassment counseling to metal-detector installation, states have begun to require additional information. Forty states now require a program report and 42 states have begun requiring a financial report of program expenditures. States have also implemented on-site visits and required local self-reports as part of their oversight of local program activities (Government Accounting Office, 1997b).

On a federal level, the Department of Education created a strategic plan that emphasizes the role of the SDFSCA program. The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) requires that all executive agencies, including the Department of Education, develop a five-year strategic plan that includes long-term strategic goals, annual performance goals, and reports on progress toward those goals.

The seven departmental strategic goals call for all students to be able to

- Read independently by the end of the third grade.
- Master challenging mathematics, including the foundations of algebra and geometry, by the end of the eighth grade.
- Be prepared for and able to afford at least two years of college by age 18, and be able to pursue lifelong learning as adults.
- Have a talented, dedicated, and well-prepared teacher in their classroom.

- Have their classroom connected to the Internet by the year 2000 and be technologically literate.
- *Learn in strong, safe, and drug-free schools* (emphasis added).
- Learn according to challenging and clear standards of achievement and accountability.

To assess the accomplishment of students learning in strong, safe, and drug-free schools, the Department of Education created the following six indicators. To be successful, a school had to

- Slow the increase in the rates of alcohol and drug use among school-age children by 2000.
- Achieve continuous decreases in criminal and violent incidents in schools by students between 1993 and 2002.
- Realize continuous increases in the percentage of students reporting negative attitudes toward drug and alcohol use between 1993 and 2002.
- Improve prevention programs by having the majority of LEAs participate in SDFSCA programs based on the Principles of Effectiveness by 1999.
- Ensure that by 1999 data were collected statewide on alcohol and drug use among students and on violence in schools.
- By 2000, significantly increase the number of teachers who were appropriately trained to address discipline problems.

The Office of National Drug Control Policy has included SDFSCA goals in its 1999 Performance Measurement Effectiveness (PME) system. The first of the strategy's six goals, aimed at reducing illegal drug use and drug availability by 50 percent and reducing health and social consequences by 25 percent, focuses on enabling America's youth to reject illegal drugs as well as alcohol and tobacco. Selected objectives of this goal include the following:

- Provide students in grades K-12 with research-based alcohol, tobacco, and drug prevention programs and policies.

- Encourage and assist the development of community coalitions and programs to prevent drug abuse and underage alcohol and tobacco use.
- Develop and implement a set of research-based principles upon which prevention programming can be based.
- Support and highlight research, including the development of scientific information, to inform drug, alcohol, and tobacco prevention programs targeting young Americans.

KEY FINDINGS OF PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

To assess SDFSCA-funded programs' long- and short-term effectiveness, evaluations have been conducted by the GAO, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Education. The following issues that inhibit or encourage local program success have been identified.

State-level efforts at overseeing local program selection and implementation are minimally effective. While both state and local education authorities have broad discretion on how to use SDFSCA funds, states may lack the staffing resources needed to provide oversight and technical assistance. Legislation dictates that local districts will decide which programs to spend their allocation on. Part of the job of the state coordinators is to aid in fund allocation and local program supervision. Yet state coordinator offices often have very small staffs, making it difficult or impossible to provide sustained assistance or to oversee district activities. Data from one state follow-up study showed that of 48 state SDFSCA coordinators, half reported providing monitoring visits to fewer than one-fourth of their districts. Eighteen of the 25 state coordinators who conducted program-specific monitoring visits stated that because of a lack of staffing funds they were no longer able to visit as many districts as they had previously visited. Of the 34 state SDFSCA program administrators who responded to a survey question on technical-assistance problems, 23 cited insufficient staff size, nine cited lack of program funds, and nine cited lack of knowledge or expertise among state-level staff as

barriers to meeting districts' technical-assistance needs (Silvia, Thorne, and Tashjian, 1997).

SDFSCA grantees are required to develop goals and objectives for their state and local programs. All states have met this requirement. However, the quality of the goals and objectives varies within states (Government Accounting Office, 1995). It has become apparent that many district goals have not been focused in the right area. Some have targeted the quantity of work completed--e.g., number of staff trained--rather than measuring program outcomes. Increased guidance by state coordinators may refocus district goals and efforts to obtain these goals.

There is little consistency of programs even within schools. The amount and content of prevention programming varies greatly within both classrooms and schools, and even within districts attempting to deliver consistent programs, which tend to have the best results. As the 1997 Research Triangle Institute study reports, "student outcomes were better when prevention programs had greater stability over time, a definition that includes being in place for a long period, with continuity of staff, planning and leadership." Often, however, local patterns reflect inconsistent implementation. Teachers and counselors simply do not have enough time, support, training, or motivation to provide all the instruction and other services and activities that they plan to provide (Silvia, Thorne, and Tashjian, 1997).

In focus groups conducted by RAND, teachers stated that they often doubted the continuity of school-based prevention programs. Grant money seemed to come and go. One teacher said, "We're all in limbo. . . . Are we getting it or are we not getting it? . . . People are asking, Can I do this prevention activity next year or not?" The state education agencies often award grants for three years, but local funding fluctuates year by year, based on the state's budget and priorities. It is clear that developing secure administrative and financial support for prevention programming is vital for improving the performance of prevention programs.

Few of the specific programs that have been applied in schools have been found to be effective in previous research (Silvia, Thorne, and

Tashjian, 1997). Current drug and violence prevention literature reaches near consensus on a few points concerning prevention programs. It is generally agreed that the most effective prevention programs are "comprehensive." That is, they not only teach children how to resist and deal with the social influences that encourage the use of drugs, but they also correct misperceptions of peer drug use rather than exposing children to the dangers of drug use and violence. Unfortunately, comprehensive programs are rarely implemented, possibly because they require increased teacher training and staff time and therefore have higher costs.

DARE, the most widely implemented program, is reportedly used in 48 percent of elementary schools, 21 percent of middle schools, and 8 percent of high schools. Despite students', parents', and teachers' enthusiasm for DARE, a number of research studies have shown that the program has few short-term effects and no long-term positive effects (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). But even though schools may be aware of data suggesting that the program does not provide positive long-term results, they like having it around. As one prevention coordinator explained, "Not only are there police officers around the school, but that's one less period a week that teachers need to prepare for, so they get some time off. Also the responsibility and cost of prevention programs is shifted from the schools to the police department. Additionally, having DARE in school makes principals look good in front of parents. DARE is a nationally recognized program and most Americans don't realize that long-term it doesn't make a huge difference. Parents are just happy about their kids going through DARE programming."

School districts may conduct periodic, informal assessments of their programs, but fewer than half conduct formal evaluations or use formal evaluation results in selecting or altering their programs. (Silvia, Thorne, and Tashjian, 1997). Prior to 1994, there was no national mandate to collect data in a systematic and uniform way that would permit real evaluation. And even since the 1994 federal mandate was enacted, schools have not been well informed on the procedures and requirements of collecting outcome data. As one professional evaluator

of the SDFSCA program said, "Schools are told that they need to give data on outcomes of their programs, but they aren't told until the very last minute before the information is needed, so researchers don't know how accurate all of their information is. Often, they are promised that in the following year, they will be given advance notice, and then they are not . . . the same problem happens over and over. In recent years, program officials have been trying to change this, but we haven't seen a real difference yet."

The Department of Education has taken an interest in encouraging schools to use programs that have been shown to be effective and in encouraging schools to formally evaluate their own programs. The implementation of the 1998 Principles of Effectiveness at the state level and the introduction of the two national priorities (full-time middle-school coordinators and "Safe Schools, Healthy Students" programs) demonstrate the Department's commitment to remedying this problem. The grant application for National Programs emphasizes a research-based focus: "The National Programs portion of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act supports the development of programs that (1) provide models or proven effective practices that will assist schools and communities around the Nation to improve their programs funded under the State Grants portion of the SDFSCA; and (2) develop, implement, evaluate, and disseminate new or improved approaches to creating safe and orderly learning environments in schools."

1999 REAUTHORIZATION PROPOSALS

New measures have been proposed to further improve the portfolio of the entire IASA program. Specific to improving SDFSCA and other programs' accountability factors, a set of six accountability measures has been developed to hold schools, district teachers, and students to high standards. These measures include the following:

- Support states in developing a single, rigorous accountability system for all districts and schools.
- Provide states and districts with additional resources to turn around low-performing schools.

- Update the recently enacted Education Flexibility Partnership Act of 1999, which permits states to waive selected requirements of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) programs.
- Increase accountability to parents and the public through school report cards.
- Assist all students in meeting challenging state standards.
- Develop first-rate student progress and promotion policies to end the practices of social promotion and grade retention.

In the arena of school safety, the Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 (part of IASA) has the following goals:

- Emphasize the importance of research-based programs by awarding local grants in accordance with the quality of the grant plan and its consistency with the Principles of Effectiveness.
- Concentrate funds in areas of high need by focusing grants on high-need programs that are of sufficient size and scope to be effective.
- Improve coordination between SEAs and governors' programs by mandating that state agencies and governors' offices submit a joint application for funding and by administering a joint technical-assistance and accountability effort.
- Provide training and technical assistance by creating a center designed to improve teacher and administrator ability to identify and implement effective, research-based prevention programs.
- Help schools respond to violent or traumatic crises. The School Emergency Response to Violence (Project SERV) would provide immediate assistance to schools that have undergone a violent or traumatic crisis.
- Require schools that receive SDFSCA funds to prohibit the possession or use of tobacco, drugs, or alcohol in or around school.

- Require an individual evaluation of students who bring a firearm to school to assess their level of danger to themselves and to others.
- Strengthen program accountability.

At the state level, the proposed reauthorization of SDFSCA involves a change in the states' triennial self-reports. The following measures have been proposed to improve state accountability as well as interagency collaboration:

- State educational agencies should be required to use at least 70 percent of their total State Grant funding for competitive awards to local agencies (current law directs SEAs to award at least 91 percent of their funding to local agencies based on enrollment and greatest need). Competitive funding evaluations should be based on how well funds would be used to support research-based drug and violence prevention programs, the quality of the programs, and how closely grant applications are aligned with the Principles of Effectiveness.
- Local agency awards should be sustained for a maximum of three years. Within the final two years of the grant, funding should be sustained only as long as a local agency can make clear that progress has been made toward its performance indicators.
- To ensure increased coordination between the governors and state agencies, applications (for both LEA and governors' funding) should require that the governor and the SEA apply jointly for funds. These applications should detail the state's outcome-based performance indicators for drug and violence prevention, describe how SDFSCA state grant funds will be coordinated with other drug and education programs, and outline the procedures the state will use to inform its local agencies of the performance indicators.
- The majority of the governors' allocated funds (at least 80 percent) should be used for competitive subgrants to community-based organizations. Like the LEAs, local community-based agencies should be required to use SDFSCA funds to support

research-based drug and violence prevention and to follow guidelines aligned with the Principles of Effectiveness.

- In applying for federal funds, state agencies should be required to describe in their applications how they plan to provide technical assistance to local agencies that are not receiving federal funding.
- State applications should be developed in consultation and coordination with appropriate state officials and representatives of parents, students, and community-based organizations. States should also be required to assist in conducting national impact evaluations of programs.
- Districts that receive SDFSCA funding should be required to expel students who possess a firearm at school; report all school-related suicides; have part- or full-time program coordinators; evaluate their program every two years, assessing progress toward meeting goals and objectives; and have a comprehensive plan for safe and drug-free schools.

SCHOOL REFORM AND PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Simply put, most national, state, and local school-reform efforts have ignored the existence of the SDFSCA program and have given little or no attention to the range of issues the program addresses. The seventh National Goal has received nowhere near the same emphasis as the goals dealing with school readiness and academic achievement. The major elements of the national school reform legislation have been the Goals 2000 program, the school-to-work initiative, the redesign of ESEA, and, especially, Title 1 funds for high-poverty schools. Each of these initiatives has been intended to enhance the possibility of high-performance, standards-based reform according to conventional academic criteria.

It is only recently, with the shift of attention from drug use to broader concerns about violence, safety, and discipline, that the potential for the SDFSCA program and school reform coordination has come into focus. Moreover, recent evaluations of the program have reported the same problems in effectiveness--namely, poor implementation and lack

of comprehensiveness--that have plagued mainstream school reform efforts. The focus groups interviewed for this study clearly showed that local practitioners, even as they follow the formal guidelines of the program and local projects, see SDFSCA resources as the only ones available to help them deal with the very broad and deep problems of hostility, isolation, and alienation that affect significant numbers of students in every school. These serious problems are seen to underlie violence and drug abuse as well as other school problems such as poor attendance and low achievement. Ironically, these perceptions may make integration of the program more feasible in that they address a set of issues that educators acknowledge responsibility for, rather than the specific problem of drug-abuse prevention, which teachers tend to see as "one more thing added to an already busy day."

The current atmosphere allows two alternative directions for SDFSCA's development: Programs like SDFSCA may be subordinated to law-enforcement strategies such as continued funding for metal detectors and on-campus security. Or, it is to be hoped, the perception of a safe school environment as a necessity for academic achievement will lead to greater program integration with Title I, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and other programs intended to make schools more accessible, attractive, and effective for all students.

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FOCUS GROUPS: SAFE AND DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS PROGRAMS

Melissa A. Bradley, P. Michael Timpane, Peter Reuter

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Two focus groups of teachers and administrators, one from a suburban school district and one from an urban school district, met to discuss how violence and drugs affected schools and how schools were coping with these problems. The highlights of the discussion included the following:

1. The increased emphasis on academic achievement and testing is reducing the amount of resources available for controlling violence and drug-related problems. The argument that violence and drugs substantially impact the ability of schools to teach does not prove persuasive.
2. Violence and safety are more pressing and persuasive issues than drug use, and safety is an overriding concern in the urban district.
3. Problems are occurring at earlier ages, and programs need to respond to this.
4. The SDFSCA program is an important source of specialized funds for many programs that get little local support. Low and unstable levels of funding at the school level present serious problems for maintaining program quality.
5. The demand for research-based programs is admirable, but it ignores two aspects of school realities: (1) the need to tailor programs to the specific situation, and (2) the difficulty of gaining access to research findings and carrying out either data collection or evaluation, especially given the modest resources available.

BACKGROUND

The two focus groups were conducted as part of a study sponsored by the Department of Education to help the federal government better understand the implementation of drug-abuse and violence prevention programs at the district and school level. Two dissimilar school districts were selected for the focus groups so that comparisons could be made across different types of school systems. Focus Group 1 consisted of school and local government officials in a suburban district next to a major city; Group 2 consisted of representatives from the school system, local government, and private social service programs of a major city. Participants were asked to discuss a variety of issues concerning the funding, administration, implementation, and impact of drug-abuse and violence prevention programs.

The Group 1 school district educates almost 19,000 students in approximately 30 schools. It boasts a high graduation rate, a high percentage of students pursuing postsecondary education, and test-score averages well above state and national norms. The student body in this district has a high degree of ethnic diversity, with students speaking more than 60 different languages. Approximately 40 percent of the students are white, 32 percent are Hispanic, 17 percent are Black, and 10 percent are Asian/Pacific Islander. Approximately 40 percent of the students receive free or reduced-price lunches. The district is able to offer a wide variety of individualized educational programs, and technology is an integrated part of most classrooms. The average per-student spending in 1997-1998 was approximately \$9,300.

The participants in Group 2 come from a school district in a large city. The district has more than 200,000 students and more than 250 schools. Class sizes in this district average 30 or more students. The school system includes a large school police force. Approximately 80 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, and 42 percent live in poverty. Average school spending for elementary and secondary students in 1997-1998 was just under \$6,000.

FOCUS GROUP COMPOSITION

Participants were selected by RAND from lists provided by each district. They included school administrators, principals, teachers, counselors, and representatives of local government and private social service programs. Participants were chosen to provide a range of programs, responsibilities, and school levels.

The first focus group consisted of nine participants and two facilitators, all of whom were involved in some facet of the district's drug and violence prevention programs. Participants included one elementary school assistant principal, one elementary health and physical education teacher, three high school counselors, one high school minority-achievement counselor, two district administrators, and a coordinator for the county prevention and intervention program. The session lasted just over 2 hours.

The second focus group consisted of 14 participants and three facilitators; like the members of Group 1, all of them were involved in some facet of the district's drug and violence prevention programs. Participants included two elementary school teachers, five high school teachers, a school counselor, a high school dean, a school policeman, the director of safety for city schools, a coordinator for the city prevention and intervention program, and two directors of local private social service agencies. The second focus group lasted just over 2-1/2 hours.

RESULTS

The facilitator opened the discussion, providing a brief overview of the project and the purpose of the focus group. Participants were encouraged to offer their opinions, suggestions, and experiences on the implementation of violence and drug prevention programs and their integration into the school curriculum. Specific questions were posed by the facilitator for discussion. The protocol for the focus groups is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Focus Group Protocol: Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program

Introduction

Good morning. I am NAME, the moderator of today's focus group.

Thank you for coming. We appreciate your help. We are taping this discussion today so we don't have to take notes. This discussion is anonymous--we won't be associating your names with what you say here--which means I would like everyone to use first names only today. I want to assure you that anything said here today will not be attributed to specific individuals or schools in any way effect your job.

I am with RAND in Washington D.C. RAND is a non-profit research institution. In July, RAND will be hosting a conference on the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFS). This conference will bring together prevention researchers, practitioners, and policy makers from SDFS programs and related educational and prevention programs in order to address the question: What can the federal government do to enhance the significance, appeal, and effectiveness of drug and violence prevention programs that education authorities and teachers often have difficulty fitting into an already crowded set of educational responsibilities?

In preparation for the conference we wanted to speak with school teachers, principals, administrators, and other stake-holders to hear in their own words the problems and solutions that they see in the implementation of the violence and drug prevention programs and their integration into school curriculum.

The feedback you give us today will allow us to better focus and shape the discussion at the conference to address the "real" issues in school based intervention. We will prepare a report from this meeting for the conference, but again, no specific individual or school will be identified in the report. The meeting will be taped, but only to help us report accurately on this discussion.

I also have OTHER RESEARCH STAFF here with me today and they will be participating in our discussion.

TOPICS:

I. Participant Background

Before we begin, I'd like to go around the table and have each of you tell me your first name and your current position.

- How long have you been involved with violence or drug prevention programs? In what capacity?
- Length of time in LOCATION.

II. Nature of Problem in LOCATION

I'd like to start off by talking a little bit about the nature and extent of the drug and violence problem in LOCATION.

- In general, how much of a problem do you feel exists in your school and in LOCATION in general?
- What is the nature of this problem? For example, is it serious only in high schools and only in a few of those schools or is it very widespread?
- Recent national developments (for example, Columbine High School) have shifted much of the public's attention from drug prevention to violence prevention. How does this strike you?
- How do school safety measures, such as policing and metal detectors, relate to these issues?

III. Development of Current Program

- What is the program you work in or with? What curricula do you have? How much time is devoted? Etc.
- How did this program develop?
- How has it been adapted or modified as you've worked with it?
- Who is the program targeted to?
- What is the intent of program?
- How is the program connected to other activities at the school? In the community?
- Who is served?
- What has the impact of the program been?
- How does district/school monitor and evaluate program?

IV. Resources

- What is available?
- How much does the program cost?
- How are programs funded? That is, apart from SFDSA, what other moneys are explicitly aimed at drug and/or violence prevention?
- How do you tap into it?

V. Role of the Community, Others

- How does school, community regard the program? Is there much scrutiny of, or pressure about, this area of curriculum?
- What role does the school district administration play?
- How would you go about improving, changing current program?
- What roles is played by outside organizations, community groups, etc.?
- What role is played by state Department of Education, county government, Federal government?
- Is Federal research and technical assistance literature useful to you?

VI. Improvements

- What's not working? What is?
- What would you like to see changed?

Closing

- In summing up: is there anything I haven't asked you that I should have?

Thank you very much for helping us out today. Your feedback will help us in better understanding of how these programs are implemented and integrated into school curriculum.

- If we have any additional questions or need clarification on any point that was made today, may we contact you?
- Would you like to receive a copy of the final report?

If you would like more information about the study, or if you would like to discuss any of these issues further, please don't hesitate to contact me at RAND: (202) 296-5000, ext. 5336.

Nature of the Problem

Each group was first asked to characterize the nature and scope of the problem within its district.

School safety. A recent parent survey rated the safety in Group 1 schools quite highly; students and parents reported that they felt fairly safe. Statistically, the schools have experienced a decrease in incidents of serious violence. However, the participants emphasized that while many in their community may think they are immune to these problems, they are not. Their schools do mirror national trends, and violence or the threat of violence is pervasive. Students are more afraid than they have ever been; they cannot remedy things on their own because they are afraid of what their peers might do after an altercation or dispute—would they come back with more friends, with weapons?

The Group 2 school system clearly experiences more problems with violence than does its suburban counterpart. Several respondents stated that safety issues are their number one concern. Group 2 reported that rape, robbery, shootings, and other serious crimes involving students and faculty had been committed in or near their schools. A significant number of students in the district are returning from prison. Problems with the physical plant, such as broken locks and fire alarms, add to

concerns. The overriding perspective is that violence is increasing. The participants cited increased referrals to treatment programs for younger and younger students. They felt that to some extent they were dealing with a different breed of students, children who refused to deal with authority figures.

Many of the schools in the Group 2 district use fairly sophisticated safety technology, including cameras and metal detectors. Community policing is also used within the schools, and some schools hold town meetings to discuss school safety issues.

However, regardless of the actual amount of violence, most participants in both groups conveyed the important point that the seriousness of the violence has changed. One participant commented that while there used to be fist fights, fights now involve weapons. Some participants in Group 1 felt that their schools are actually less violent overall now than they were years ago but that the students who are causing trouble are more likely than before to cause serious injury with guns and other weapons.

Drug abuse. Group 1 perceived their experience with alcohol and other drugs as falling within the national range. Like the rest of the nation, they are seeing children involved with alcohol and drugs at a younger age and are now focusing many of their programs on younger children. Although drugs were clearly mentioned as a problem by Group 2 participants, most of the discussion focused on violence.

Where should the emphasis be? Both groups felt that drug abuse and violence are symptomatic of a number of different issues. Group 1 pointed out that people who abuse drugs are violent and that the two problems are very much linked; the underlying characteristics are the same. They must be dealt with together, energetically and repeatedly.

What effect has the Columbine High School incident had on your school? Group 1 felt that after Columbine some students finally began to report incidents. The perception of the group was that you can hear and learn more from students about what is happening than you can from anyone else, that they know about problems before adults do. If you have built rapport with students, they will keep you informed. To build rapport, one must know students personally—know their names. "That's a

big prevention right there," said one participant. Part of the training that children need is referral skills. There must be a category for those who report problems besides that of "squealer." Children must let school staff know which students are having problems. Students feel good knowing that school authorities will take charge if they know about problems, that they can and will act on problems.

Group 2 commented that the media had reported a great deal about Columbine but had long downplayed the increasing levels of violence, including killings, in their schools. One participant felt that an incident like that at Columbine would not have happened in 90 percent of their schools because the schools have small buildings and small campuses. They know their students and they notice the changes. They too felt that school staff must discuss these issues with students, and that students need to know that the teachers and staff care about them.

Roots of the Problems and Assigning Responsibility for Change

Participants were asked to reflect on the roots of these problems and the responsibility of parents, schools, communities, and others for violence and drug prevention.

The roots of problems. Members of Group 2 offered many reasons for the increase in drug abuse, violence, and other social problems:

- Students do not have enough positive things to do with their time.
- There are not enough programs and activities that students enjoy and not enough jobs.
- Many students no longer have opportunities to dream about their futures, as job training and other specialized programs have been cut from budgets; many students can no longer get jobs with which they can support families after graduation.
- Many students are already significantly lagging academically by the time they get to first grade, and they are still illiterate in high school; these students are frustrated and cause many of the problems.

- Schools pass students along because it's easier than dealing with them; students who are on the fence see this and subsequently cease to struggle through the learning process.
- There are no alternative programs for these students.

Group 2 expressed the belief that the consequences for negative behavior are not severe enough to have an impact on children, nor are they consistent. The participants indicated that administrators are reluctant to treat offenses severely and swiftly. In many cases, children are being raised without monitoring, bonding, or caring and by parents who themselves are children who lack the maturity to instill values. One Group 2 participant expressed the view that the drug culture has educated children better than the rest of society has. The drug culture gives them what they want, and it provides them with the only opportunities they can see.

Group 1 noted that parents seem to be overly concerned with academics and that they ignore social problems their children are experiencing. They also discussed the prevalence of violence in society as a whole and the role the media plays in promoting violence and other negative images. They felt that allowing children access to guns was a serious issue. Like Group 2, they also saw students without a sense of vision for the future.

Whose is responsible for what? Group 1 felt strongly that schools should not carry the brunt of all that happens, as students spend only six hours a day in school, fewer than 200 days a year. They said that a community effort is needed, with businesses, neighborhoods, schools, and parents all working together. Group 1 noted that some parents put too much responsibility on schools and are not present in their children's lives.

One Group 2 participant remarked that teachers now have to teach children the difference between right and wrong. A school policeman said that truant officers bring students back to school every day, but if there is no accountability for the parents, no warrants going out against the parents when they refuse to take an active role in their children's lives, the schools' efforts are meaningless. Another

participant expressed the view that the educators should be allowed to educate and that social programs should be handled in after-school programs by individuals who are trained to deal with these issues. Yet another remarked that teachers are educated to teach—you cannot place them in a class and expect them to deal with gangsters. School personnel can react only so far, because they are inundated. Participants expressed concerns over shrinking school budgets, lack of manpower to deal with all the problems, and large class sizes.

Conflicting demands—education or social programs? Participants were asked about the seemingly conflicting demands of educating students and providing help in dealing with social issues. Group 1 participants pointed out that a child in trouble will not learn the academics, no matter what.

Both groups expressed concerns that current performance standards have put so much added strain on teachers and administrators that many of the important social programs are being pushed aside. The Group 1 participants said that in their experience violence prevention and drug education become important only when something explodes. The pressure caused by testing is great. While parents and their community may say that they understand the need to balance the academic and social programs, when push comes to shove, it's all about academics. Furthermore, with the increased emphasis on testing, teachers want their students in class all of the time, regardless of whether or not they are learning. There is no time to address other problems.

Group 2 participants noted that in their district, each school is now rated primarily on educational achievement and attendance, and the principal's raise is affected by the rating. Consequently, in the past year, everything the schools have done is instruction-based, and other programs have been pushed aside. The participants also indicated that incidents of violence often go unpunished because schools are fearful of negative press or the resulting feedback from parents and the community.

Both groups expressed strong concerns about the children who are not successful academically. Group 1 participants are concerned that children who really need special programs will have self-image problems when they fail, and then everyone will have dynamite waiting to explode.

They cautioned that as more pressure is put on teachers for testing, they will have less time to get personally involved with the students. A Group 1 participant cautioned that we are losing the personal side of education because the teachers are under so much stress. The overemphasis on academic excellence—the goal that parent, community, and business leaders support so strongly—may eventually backfire.

One participant in Group 2 said that every principal in the district was directed by the district to identify a safety and crisis team and to meet with staff to develop a school safety plan. However, teachers participating in the focus group had heard nothing about this and said that it was not being done at their schools. The district may tell principals to take safety seriously, but it clearly does not go any further in many schools. Participants said that this happened because the schools have so much to deal with, they are overwhelmed and safety is just one of the things that get pushed aside.

What can be done? Group 1 participants believe that teachers can do a lot to help. Some said that the educators have been remiss in at least one area: They can do a better job of reaching out to students. They need to find moments to teach students what is right. Both focus groups emphasized the personal relationships and rapport that teachers build with students as key features in effecting change. This rapport-building would go a long way toward stopping the violence. One participant in Group 2 noted that although her school has security cameras, she feels safe because of rapport with the students and their families.

Both groups said that parents need help in dealing with the issues they confront today. One participant noted that problems often start because of the environment in which the child is raised. Many parents are not equipped to recognize—let alone deal with—the kinds of issues their children face, and more parent education is needed.

Identification of risk factors in children was a key element for both groups. Participants feel that all parents, teachers, and communities should know about these developmental risk factors. One Group 2 respondent was struck by how early the warning signs appear in the children who get in trouble. However, these signs are often

completely ignored until the situation gets so bad that it is difficult to save the child.

According to Group 2, the school administration should provide more support and manpower for discipline within the schools. The district should make safety and discipline top priorities. Moreover, follow-up with truant and problem children needs to be more rapid and consistent. The school district should include many safety and discipline programs as part of the basic educational process, thereby eliminating the need for outside funding with restricted purposes.

Programs and Funding

Program funding. Group 1 reported that without the Safe and Drug-Free Schools funding, many of their programs would never have been started. This group also expressed concerns about the variability of funding from year to year. Schools are often left in limbo waiting to see how much money they will have, not knowing whether they will be able to continue programs that are already in existence. Participants also said that if funding is tied to research-based programs, government should increase the amount of funds to cover the added work. Losing funds because of reallocation by the state was also a concern.

Group 2's district receives program funding from the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program, state government, the district, and private foundations. Where possible, the district uses other sources of funding creatively. For instance, Title 1 funds can be used to train teachers in classroom discipline and conflict resolution. Group 2 participants all believe that funding is fragmented, unstable, and inadequate. They mentioned a peer-mediation/conflict-resolution program that they used previously but have not used in the past few years because there is not enough funding to train anyone to run it. Given the current funding available, funds need to be spent more effectively and efficiently. One way to increase efficiency is to lessen administrative components. One participant described a program that was ready to start in October, but the actual funding did not filter through until March. Inconsistency in funding is also a problem. A program is implemented for a year and then there is no further funding; this simply increases the cynicism of the

people who need to buy in to the programs. When the government sends out Requests for Proposals (RFPs), rather than asking for in-kind services, it should fund the program for three years and require recipients to fund the program for the next three.

Group 2 also reported that the change in the focus from drugs to safe and drug-free schools caused problems with programs already in effect. When the funding stream changed, successful drug prevention programs had to be changed to add violence issues, and the programs were "destroyed."

In both districts, the current funding is inadequate. Teachers and other program personnel often need to look for other grants, without having the time for grant writing. Many of the costs to run school safety programs come out of the staff's own pockets.

Program development. In Group 1's district, there is no mandatory push for programs in the schools, although the district does target some schools and provides resources to start programs. Group 1 participants saw programs as evolving to fill needs as the needs were identified. Programs emerge out of a creative moment—an identified need and availability of funding. One program began as substance-abuse-treatment outreach, but over the years, program coordinators saw a growing need to address these issues earlier—before they became treatment issues—and began to focus on younger children. At one high school, programs are student driven. Students themselves decide where they want to put their focus (drugs and alcohol this year, eating disorders last year). Districtwide, with so much diversity and different cultures, ages, and problems, there can be no cookie-cutter approach. Whatever program is used, adjustments will be necessary to fit different groups. Generally, the more people who know and can get the information out, the better. Students need to hear the messages from many different people.

Group 2 participants also believe that children need to receive the message many times, from many sources, and over time. Given the fundamental social problems underlying drugs, violence, and safety in schools, any specific program is probably too narrow and small to deal with the issue completely. Programs must focus on many components including life skills, mentoring, academics, and parenting, and they

must begin with preschool children. At the same time, programs must be systematic and coordinated to make sure each step builds on other programs. The lack of coverage and consistency is a general problem.

Programs. A variety of programs were described by both groups. Group 1 focused heavily on mediation and other peer-centered activities. One participant noted that when you empower children, they take over and become responsible for themselves and their peers. She was particularly enthusiastic about programs that were developed by the students.

Group 2 participants provided a long list of programs with which they were involved, including Outward Bound, Beacon Schools, programs to "take back" entire neighborhoods, "scared-straight"-type programs, and programs that involve the entire family. They were all enthusiastic about these programs because the programs addressed issues at the community level, used intensive case management, and were well evaluated.

Accountability

The groups were asked about the accountability for programs. Both groups recognized the value of using effective programs and said that it would be better to have no program than a poorly run one that can actually cause harm. There was general support for research-based models, and both groups reported that the programs being adopted are those whose success is documented, either by external research or by local program data used to convince administrators and parents that programs are worthwhile.

It is important to address the nay-sayers. A participant in Group 1 related that not long ago there was move to get rid of counselors in elementary schools; the lack of data and accountability has opened the door for the politicians to come in and attack these positions.

What accountability currently exists? In the Group 1 district, accountability for programs at the school level is very basic. The schools are accountable to the district in only the following ways: Schools must verify that they have the programs, that they have been trained to run them, that teachers and coordinators say they work, and that students appear to be participating and benefiting. It is not

always possible to put an effectiveness rating on these programs. Some individual educators and schools keep statistics on their programs, but nothing is mandated. Next year, the district plans to implement a new research-based program in the middle schools. However, participants emphasized that they already do things based on the literature and that they did their homework before picking these programs. They already use many components of research-based programs, but they may not use all components or they may not use them in the order the program suggests. They also were concerned about the lack of data available on problems. They asked, "How can you be accountable for preventing something if you have no numbers to know what you are preventing?" Only limited data are available to help them assess what they are doing.

The Group 2 district office tells individual schools to identify their own needs and to contract with an agency to provide services. The agency is then supposed to provide a report to the district. Since the system is decentralized, if the agencies do not send reports, the district does not know what is going on in the schools. To provide more accountability, the district has adopted a new policy that prohibits schools from applying for grants individually. The district also has coordinators in school clusters who are supposed to prepare and share school profiles and lists of school programs with other schools in the cluster. While the district asks that the reports be prepared, mandating them is difficult. At the school level, accountability has loopholes. The general perception is that, with all its other concerns and crises, the administration does not follow up on social programs. Often it comes down to meeting requirements for these types of programs in the simplest way possible, perhaps just paying lip service to them at a staff meeting and reporting back that the task was completed. The Group 2 participants from private and government social service agencies reported that some of their programs do have evaluation or reporting components.

Feasibility of reporting and evaluation. Group 1 expressed a strong conviction that the issue of accountability and research gets back to the issue of their job descriptions. Are they educators, therapists, drug-prevention specialists, or something else? While they

may know a program works because they see the results, they have no concrete research—they are not researchers, and they do not have that expertise. Participants emphasized that they all go above and beyond their jobs and spend an enormous amount of extra time with these programs. They feel that it is not possible to find even more time to justify the programs with research. One participant suggested that at the elementary level, the schools would probably abandon these programs if they had to do all the research and documentation. With such a small amount of money available, developing a research-based program is ridiculous. Moreover, a research-based approach would require long-term follow-up. While there is some possibility of combining information from participant reports and other records to track the longer-term results, it will be very difficult to go much further.

Group 2 echoed many of these concerns. They also do not have the time or the manpower to collect data or evaluate programs. Within their schools there is always some more-pressing obligation that takes time away from what is available to review programs and determine how they are working.

One participant in Group 2 noted that while funding agencies may tell schools to use programs that are research-based, they do not actually force them to do so. Some groups take the funding for the program and still do their own thing. Just as the children need limits, those who receive funding need limits: If you say that a program is proven effective, you should require the practitioners to replicate it or deny them funding.

What criteria should be used to evaluate? Group 1 expressed many concerns over the criteria used for evaluating programs. They believe that there is research to prove both sides of every story. Participants emphasized that evaluators must be sure they are using the right criteria to evaluate a program. For example, DARE was designed as a communication program and evolved into a drug-prevention program. Evaluators did not look at the original purpose of the program; they considered only what it eventually became.

The participants also cautioned that evaluators must watch what they are actually evaluating to make sure the program is really well

implemented and has some substance. The mere existence of a program does not mean that the program is well run or properly implemented. Intentions are wonderful, but it takes skill, knowledge, and dedication to run these programs. Moreover, improper evaluation might eliminate a potentially beneficial program.

Another Group 1 participant wanted to know the level at which research is needed and how intense the requirements would be for documentation and evaluation. Participants wanted clarification on whether programs should simply be research-based or whether ongoing evaluation was required.

Group 2 participants believe that what people want to see are statistics showing changes in behavior. However, they feel that this is a problem, since a single program will not show much change. The coordination of many programs together is needed to effect change.

Wish Lists

Both groups concluded with a discussion of what they would do with more money.

The wish list for Group 1 included quality control to standardize and tailor programs, to make them more consistent across schools; incentives for administrators to support drug-abuse and violence prevention programs and for parents to be more involved; incentives for the total community to take responsibility; more alternative opportunities for children so they can see that they need not be involved with drugs and violence; and alternative activities that involve parents.

Group 2 would spend additional funds on improving physical safety, providing more intervention in middle schools, improving discipline and conduct, early intervention, increasing youth leadership programs, literacy, and mandated alternative programs. At earlier points in the discussions, Group 2 participants expressed a desire to see such things as smaller class sizes, making school voluntary, closing private schools, elections of the superintendent and school board members, and reinstitution of truant officers and individuals who go to the homes of students to check on problems.

CONCLUSIONS

Participants in both groups believe that the effort they put into these program is worthwhile. Many indicated that they would not still be doing these programs if they did not feel strongly that they were helping children. However, they feel that the problems they are addressing with these programs are larger than just drug abuse or violence, that drug abuse and violence are only symptoms.

One participant commented that schools today are developing a part of the child that schools have not addressed historically. Schools are now responsible for emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills, not just academic intelligence. The participant attributed this to the decline in the nuclear family. Many programs allow educators to build relationships with students, something that both groups feel is critical. It was said many times that programs need to be continuous and intensive and must include both prevention and intervention measures.

Finally, participants expressed a great deal of frustration at having their hands tied by a lack of funding, a lack of consistency, administrative requirements, and legislation. Participants expressed the following sentiments:

"We can give you a sundry of things that are going wrong, but unless someone comes in and says, 'We're going to do that,' then we'll all be back here next year."

"We could put [together] an amalgamation of all our ideas today . . . but it doesn't go anywhere."

A QUARTER-CENTURY'S EXPERIENCE WITH SEX, ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND DRUG
EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOLS

OR

HOW GREAT EXPECTATIONS FOR PREVENTION PROGRAMS ARE DASHED IN 15,000
SCHOOL DISTRICTS

OR

NOT-SO-HIGH HOPES

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Aspen Institute Wye River Conference on Prevention of Drug Abuse
and Violence Among School Children

1. INTRODUCTION

It's too bad you can't just throw a peace bomb and BOOM—no
more drugs and alcohol [or teen pregnancy or AIDS].

Middle school student, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Smoking is now viewed with the zealous moral disapproval once
reserved for the ancient category of sexual deviance....Just as
the cigarette makers wanted to get the kids hooked on their
product, so the sexologists want to get the kids hooked on
theirs.

Tom Bethell, National Review (1997)

From colonial days until the present, the mission of America's
public schools has gone beyond instruction in the three Rs to encompass
character development.

Education in the Massachusetts Bay Colony had the primary moral
objective of keeping "the Old Deluder Satan" from tainting the young—and

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while the rhetoric is different, those who now promote prayer in the schools have a similar objective. Beginning in the early years of this century, public schools were expected to devote time to an ever-proliferating variety of estimable causes ranging from kindness to animals to the contribution of the working man. The "life adjustment education" movement, which flourished half a century ago, eschewed academics in favor of sociability—this was Dale Carnegie come to the public schools, as everything from hygiene to hobbies became part of the curriculum.

Though some of these ideas were initiated by educators, most were proffered by outsiders. In each instance, the underlying—and untested—assumption has been that schools really do know how to accomplish these goals, that they can shape the character of children and, in doing so, lead the way to a better society.

While the Safe Schools and Drug Act, the focus of this conference, also calls on educators to mold the young, drug and violence prevention programs are different in important ways from these earlier ventures. The behaviors to be influenced, the rejection of drugs and violence, are more specific. The focus is on the negative, convincing students not to do something. The stakes are also higher. Popular, and hence political, passions run stronger—developing life-long hobbies is one thing, keeping children from using crack cocaine or guns something altogether different. And the development of more effective evaluation tools means that the effectiveness of the schools' programs can, at least in theory, be empirically tested.

The better analogy is to behavior change programs that schools have undertaken for the past quarter-century: those focusing on pregnancy (and, since the mid-1980s, AIDS), smoking and drinking. If drug and violence prevention programs in the schools are not working well, there is something to be learned from scrutinizing programs similar in ambition but with a longer track record. Those who develop, implement and evaluate these prevention programs have learned from—more precisely, borrowed from—one another. Whatever may be the specific behavior that educators are seeking to prevent or change, the same core issues arise: Should the program focus on imparting knowledge or sharpening behavioral

skills? Should the core message be abstinence - "just say no" - or harm reduction - "be safe(r)"?

If all school-based prevention programs really represent "symbolic pork," not sensible policy, the role of policy thinking on program design is necessarily modest². Even so, at the margin there remains a role for analysis: it still makes sense to ask the "as compared to what?" questions about the range of alternative strategies³.

The task for policy analysis is to determine, within the bounds of political and bureaucratic constraints, what constitutes good policy. Among the literally thousands of pregnancy, tobacco and alcohol prevention programs that have been more or less rigorously tested, which work best and why? And, differently, what kinds of prevention education are public schools actually delivering—to what effect? What policy levers could close—or at least narrow—the gap between best practice and real practice?

²Sherman, Lawrence. "The Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program: Symbolic Pork and Evidence-Based Government," unpublished paper prepared for the Brookings Institution conference on federal education policy (May 1999).

³Eugene Bardach. *The Eightfold Path of Policy Analysis*. Berkeley: Berkeley Academic Press (1996).

2. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Health education traditionally addressed such uncontroversial matters as nutrition and exercise. In the 1970s, intense public concern about the twin perils of sex-promiscuity and pregnancy—and drugs—mainly marijuana—led to a shift in emphasis: the curriculum incorporated materials meant to prevent problematic adolescent behavior. AIDS upped the ante in the domain of sex: in addition to pregnancy and STDs, the risks included death. Crack cocaine had a similar impact on perceptions of drugs.

Despite the fact that the incidence of drug use among teenagers declined steadily between 1975 and 1990⁴, a drumbeat of fear-arousing news stories, the death, from drug overdose, of basketball star Len Bias, and Nancy Reagan's "just say 'no'" campaign, heightened popular anxieties. Similarly, while teen pregnancy rates remained relatively stable during the period⁵ there was heightened concern about a proliferation of urban Lolitas and, after the advent of AIDS, the more well-grounded fear that sex could spell death. Vigorous campaigns against smoking and abusive drinking, spearheaded by social movements like ASH (Action on Smoking and Health) and MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) also made prevention education seem a vitally important undertaking⁶. If one could stop children from smoking, presumably they wouldn't fall prey to a hard-to-break habit. If the young could be kept

⁴ High School and Youth Trends, National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health
(<http://www.nida.nih.gov/Infofax/USYouthtrends.html>).

⁵ US pregnancy rates for 15-19 year old females rose from 95 pregnancies per thousand a year in 1972 to 117 per thousand in 1990, before declining to 97 in 1996. Henshaw, S.K., "U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics," New York: Alan Guttmacher Institute (October, 1998). www.teenpregnancy.org/factstats.htm.

⁶ Tobacco use also declined among teenagers during this period. A massive advertising campaign, coupled with the rising price of cigarettes are the best explanations for this phenomenon. Chaloupka, Frank J. and Kenneth E. Warner. "Smoking," in Newhouse, JP and Culyer A (eds.) *Handbook of Health Economics*. Amsterdam: North-Holland (1998).

from drinking, at least until they reached legal age, there would be fewer road deaths, less alcoholism, and fewer instances of fetal alcohol syndrome. Billions of dollars have been devoted to these school-based prevention efforts: An estimated \$2 billion is spent annually for drug, tobacco and alcohol education; the figure for AIDS and sex education is likely at least as high⁷. In part, this represents a familiar policy calculation: the new course of instruction is justified because it will pay off in longer and more productive lives⁸. But for social conservatives, who have been prominent among the campaigners for prevention education—and, one might argue, for liberals who have led an absolutist attack on smoking while viewing other drug-related behavior in more relativistic terms—this is at bottom a moral crusade⁹.

A moralistic and absolutist conceptualization of the problem has influenced the design of prevention programs¹⁰. In many states, abstinence is effectively the only permissible form of sex education. The use of condoms frequently goes unmentioned as an alternative and

⁷ Because sex education programs are funded from multiple sources, and as components of other programs, there is no reliable estimate for the amount that is spent on sex education.

⁸ Some experts in the field argue that, if these policy goals are to be realized, far more money needs to be spent on prevention programs. Bosworth, Kris. "Drug Abuse Prevention: School-based Strategies that Work," in ERIC Clearinghouse on Education, 96(4) (1996). But given the ways in which schools use the resources they have, expanding these programs, without doing more, is not good policy.

⁹ See generally Gusfield, Joseph. *Symbolic Crusade: status politics and the American temperance movement*, 2nd Ed, University of Illinois Press (1986).

¹⁰ Mayer, Ruth. "1996-97 Trends in Opposition to Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Public Schools in the United States" *SIECUS Report*, 25(6);20-26 (1997).

This is not a new development. When the first survey of adolescent sexual behavior was conducted a century ago, the YMCA, which sponsored the survey, was startled to learn that even those middle class males who contemplated careers as ministers were "tempted" by sex. Those findings were used to encourage sports programs, which were supposed to sublimate these urges, and school-based programs that would show the depravity of such behaviors. Erickson, Julia A. with Sally A. Steffen, *Kiss and Tell: surveying sex in the twentieth century*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press (1999)

condom distribution in high schools is a rarity¹¹. Few, if any, schools discuss the sharing of needles as a risk factor for HIV/AIDS¹². The 1995 welfare reform law provides pregnancy prevention funds to the states—but only if the instruction focuses on abstinence¹³. So too, drug use is generally treated as always wrong, with no distinction drawn between marijuana and heroin, or between moderate use of and dependence on marijuana¹⁴. Among teens who smoke, the habit is to be broken and not tamed. Alcohol is not to be consumed responsibly by adolescents—it is not to be consumed at all. In short, political factors cause a large fraction of schools to offer *harm prevention* and not *harm reduction* programs.

Yet surveys of adolescent behavior make clear that harm prevention is a virtually unachievable objective. More than half of all high school students report having had intercourse and forty percent of women become pregnant before the age of twenty; four out of five of these pregnancies are unwanted, and eighty percent are to unmarried teens¹⁵. Half of all teenagers have taken drugs. In 1998, 22 percent of 12th-grade students reported smoking daily in the previous 30 days; 32 percent reported having five or more alcoholic beverages in a row in the previous two

¹¹ One survey finds that, nationally, just three hundred high schools distribute condoms. See University of California at San Francisco.

http://hivinsite.ucsf.edu/prevention/fact_sheets/2098.20b3.html

¹² Few, if any, studies evaluate the effectiveness of HIV education on needle sharing and none have, to our knowledge, demonstrated effectiveness.

¹³ The 1996 national welfare reform package, for example, contained \$50 million to implement programs that focus on the importance of abstinence from sexual intercourse until marriage. See: "Programs Help Prevent Teen Pregnancy", in *State Legislatures*, 25(1);11. (Jan 1999).

¹⁴ Another reason to demand drug abstinence, of course, is that possession and sale of drugs are illegal in most states. But pregnancy and HIV/AIDS instruction also emphasizes abstinence; although sex is not (at least for the moment) unlawful.

¹⁵ Henshaw, S.K., *U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics*, New York: Alan Guttmacher Institute (May, 1996); Forest, J.D., *Proportion of U.S. Women Ever Pregnant Before Age 20*, New York: Alan Guttmacher Institute (1986) unpublished; Henshaw, S.K. "Unintended Pregnancy in the United States" *Family Planning Perspectives*, 30(1);24-29 (1998); and National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. *Whatever Happened to Childhood? The Problem of Teen Pregnancy in the United States*. Washington, DC: Author (1997).

weeks¹⁶. Indeed, emphasizing the terrible consequences of sex, drugs or smoking can have the perverse effect of inclining adolescents, who are naturally given to resisting adult authority even as they claim adult prerogatives, to experimentation¹⁷.

Which institution should address these policy concerns? Without much consideration of alternatives, primary responsibility was handed over to public schools. While the fact that schools command a captive audience is a reason to concentrate prevention activities there, many children are also attached to a variety of community-based organizations whose missions focus on the non-academic aspects of childhood¹⁸. In fact, prevention programs carried on outside the school have been just as successful as school-based ventures. Nonetheless, almost all prevention instruction occurs in the schools. And despite the fact that discouraging youngsters from taking up drinking or sex is quite different from drilling them in algebra, schools have mainly defined the task of prevention education in conventional terms, as a subject of study.

Many instructional regimes have been devised. What strategies does the research suggest are most likely to be effective in changing or preventing risky behavior? And approaches do schools in fact adopt?

¹⁶ Kirby, Douglas. "No Easy Answers: Research Findings on Programs to Reduce Teen Pregnancy." Washington: The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (1997); Center For Disease Control. "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance - United States, 1997" SS-3:47 (1997); Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. "America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 1999" (1999)
<http://www.childstats.gov/ac1999/ac99.asp>

¹⁷ See generally Stinchcombe, Arthur, *Rebellion in a High School*. Chicago: Quadrangle (1964). Moreover, in sex education risk reduction programs that emphasize condom use, have not been shown to increase sexual activity. *Ibid.*

¹⁸ More than ninety-five percent of youth of ages 5-17 are in school. Kahn, Laura et al. "The School Health Policies and Programs Study (SHPPS): Rationale for Nationwide Status Report on School Health Programs." *Journal of School Health*. 65(8);291-301 (1995).

3. WHAT WORKS?

Despite the quarter-century experience with school-based programs aimed at sexual and drug- or alcohol-related behavior, disappointingly little is known about what works, what doesn't, and why. In education research generally, ceaseless and inconclusive debates rage over critical pedagogical questions: phonics versus whole language instruction, critical thinking versus skill-and-drill. The state of health education research is even more parlous.

Research takes the form of small-scale studies, many of which are never replicated. Researchers are inattentive to the normal demands of analytic rigor or else unprepared to meet the demanding standards required to support scientifically useful findings. They churn out research that, although frequently published in peer-reviewed journals, often has limited value even on its own terms. Almost uniformly the research is inattentive to the relationship, if any, between small-scale studies and what is really happening in schools: the tacit, and incorrect, assumption of the literature is that these programs can be readily replicated on a broad scale. Moreover, the overly-cozy symbiotic relationship between researchers and those who fund them—the fact that carrying out this research is vital for professors who function in a publish-or-perish world, and that many studies are underwritten by organizations with a stake in proving that prevention programs work—predictably, if perniciously, affects the research results¹⁹.

However, a small number of well-executed studies do exist in each domain of prevention. The most useful research for policy makers involves sifting through literally thousands of studies to find the handful that meet basic empirical standards, and then carried out meta-

¹⁹ Moskowitz, Joel. "Why Reports of Outcome Evaluations Are Often Biased or Uninterpretable: Examples from Evaluations of Drug Abuse Prevention Programs." *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 16;1-9 (1993). Other fields are plagued with similar social-structural problems. Studies of charter schools, for instance, face similar incentives to show that the innovation works.

analyses—summary evaluations—of them²⁰. The conclusions of these meta-analyses are consistent across the entire terrain of social problems, including violence prevention as well as sex education and drug abuse programs.

²⁰ The most useful meta-analyses reviewed by the authors include: Dusenberry, Linda and Matheas Falco. "Eleven Components of Effective Drug Abuse Prevention Curricula." *Journal of School Health*, 65(10);420-425 (1995); Glynn, T.J. "Essential Elements of School-Based Smoking Prevention Programs." *Journal of School Health*, 59:181-188 (1989); Gorman, D.M. "Do School-Based Social Skills Training Programs Prevent Alcohol Use Among Young People?" Piscataway, NJ: Center of Alcohol Studies, Rutgers (1996); Gottfredson, Denise C. "School Based Crime Prevention," in *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising*, by Lawrence W. Sherman, Denise Gottfredson, Doris MacKenzie, John Eck, Peter Reuter, and Shawn Bushway. Washington, D.C.: US Department of Justice (1997, 1998).
<http://www.preventingcrime.org/report/index.htm>; Kim, Nina et al. "Effectiveness of the 40 Adolescent AIDS-Risk Reduction Interventions". *Journal for Adolescent Health*, 20:204-215 (1997); Kirby, Douglas. "No Easy Answers: Research Findings on Programs to Reduce Teen Pregnancy." Washington: The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (1997); Kirby, Douglas, "A Review of Educational Programs Deigned to Reduce Sexual Risk-Taking Behaviors among School-Aged Youth in the United States." Washington: D.C.: US Congress Office of Technology Assessment (1995); Kirby et al. "School-Based Programs to Reduce Sexual Risk Behaviors: A Review of Effectiveness." *Public Health Reports*, 109(3): 339-360 (1995); Kirby, Douglas and Ralph J. DiClemente. "School Based Interventions to Prevent Unprotected Sex and HIV Among Adolescents" *Preventing AIDS: Theories and Methods of Behavioral Interventions*, by DiClemente, Ralph J. and John L. Peterson. New York: Plenum Press (1994); Miller, Brent C. and Roberta L. Paikoff, "Comparing Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Programs: Methods and Results" *Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy: Model Programs and Evaluations*, by Miller et al (eds.). London: Sage Publications (1992); Moore et al. "Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Programs: Interventions and Evaluations." Washington, D.C.: Child Trends Inc. (1995); Joel Moskowitz, "The Primary Prevention of Alcohol Problems: A Critical Review of the Research Literature" *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 50(1);54-88 (1989); National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. "Evaluating Abstinence Only Interventions." Washington, D.C.: Author (1998); Rooney, Brenda L. and David M. Murray. "A Meta-Analysis of Smoking Prevention Programs After Adjustment for Errors in the Unit of Analysis." *Health Education Quarterly*, February vol. 23(1): 48-64 (1996); Silvestri, Barbara and Brian R. Flay, "Smoking Education: Comparison of Practice and State-of-the-Art." *Preventive Medicine*, 18;257-266 (1989).

What doesn't work is pretty well established²¹. Simply providing factual information does not reduce risky behavior; indeed, some speculate that it may have the perverse consequence of inciting curiosity and increasing the behavior²². Scare tactics do not work either: at least since Holden Caulfield, teenagers have been adept at seeing through them. Didactic instruction doesn't accomplish much unless it is a component of a multi-faceted approach. At the other end of the pedagogical spectrum, unless self-esteem building is taught as part of a broader repertoire of skills, it is ineffective; indeed, it may reinforce adolescents' narcissism.²³

As is often true of school-based programs, success has proved harder to demonstrate than failure. Statistically significant effects may be of trifling magnitude. (Statistical significance means different things to researchers and practitioners. A program demonstrating effects that were significant only at the 0.25 level would not merit mention in a journal article. A school administrator would, however, unhesitatingly implement a program that when evaluated showed substantial impacts if the odds were three to one that those results were not due to chance.) From one study to the next, "effectiveness" refers to different things—attitude and behavior changes of various kinds. Increases in students' awareness of the dangers of certain types of behavior have been used as measures of the effectiveness of programs, even though changes in knowledge may not lead to changes in behavior. Evidence of effectiveness is often based on surveys that are administered within months, even weeks, of the end of the treatment, far too soon to show meaningful long-term impact. A program that appears to make a difference the first time it is tested is usually hard to replicate, even on a small scale—indeed, such replications are seldom attempted—and evaluations of re-

²¹ See, e.g., Tobler, N. and Stratton, H. "Effectiveness of School-Based Drug Prevention Programs: A Meta-Analysis of the Research" *Journal of Primary Prevention*, 17 (1997).

²² There is no evidence that providing information increases (or decreases) risk taking behavior. National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, *supra* note 20 (1998).

²³ Self-esteem building can be an important component of a multi-faceted program, but tends to be ineffective as an end in and of itself.

implementation efforts are even more rare. Moreover, the relationships among the principles that underlie good programs are not easily disentangled, the relationships between them hard to specify.

Still, the meta-analyses of pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, tobacco, alcohol drug and violence prevention studies identify common features of apparently effective programs. These key features cut across the prevention landscape; in this respect, anti-violence and drug prevention programs are no different than programs targeted at smoking or teen pregnancy.²⁴ The most effective programs:

1-*Focus on broader social skills.* Positive results are associated with programs that stress broader personal and social skills training. Successful programs focus not on self-esteem but decision-making skills, goal setting, communication skills, stress management, and general life skills. In particular, the development of skills that enable an adolescent to identify pressures to engage in sex, and alcohol and tobacco use, and to resist such pressures (by being able to assert, for instance, that "I have other things to do,") appears to be critical in avoiding such behavior²⁵.

2-*Provide basic and accurate information.* Safe-sex interventions tend to have more impact when they are not overly detailed, and when instruction on collateral issues, such as gender roles and dating, is avoided²⁶. Successful programs also do not overwhelm students with information on every sexually transmitted disease. Focus is also important in alcohol and tobacco programs; results are better when the emphasis is placed on direct and immediate consequences²⁷.

²⁴ The familiar statistical point is worth reiterating: The studies find correlations but cannot demonstrate causation. Moreover, they do not make plain how the several components of apparently effective programs interact. Kirby, *supra* note 20 (1997).

²⁵ See, e.g., Dusenberry, *supra*, note 20 (1995); Silvestri, *supra* note 20 (1989); Rooney, *supra*, note 20 (1996); Kirby (1997), *supra*, note 20 (1997); and Gottfredson, *supra*, note 20 (1998).

²⁶ Kirby, *supra*, note 20 (1997).

²⁷ Rooney, *supra*, note 20 (1996); Dusenberry, *supra*, note 20 (1995); and Stein, David. "An Updated Review of Effective Components and Programs (1993 to present)"

<http://www.slcosubstanceabuse.org/px/pxreview>.

3-Emphasize clear social norms and communicate a clear message.

Positive results are associated with programs that go beyond identifying the costs and benefits of the activity in question in order to persuade students that certain choices are correct (using protection when engaging in sex), abnormal (drug use), less widely followed than popularly believed (alcohol consumption and drug use) or unacceptable (violence)²⁸. The best programs have simple, clear and consistent messages that are repeated throughout: "if you have sex use a condom"; "if you start smoking it may be very hard to stop."

4-Use a variety of teaching styles. While some programs rely almost exclusively on lectures, the more effective ones rely most heavily on participatory, rather than didactic, approaches²⁹. Experiential activities such as small group discussion, games and simulations help students personalize, learn and retain information and skills.

5-Are culturally and experience- or age- appropriate. Successful in-school safe-sex education interventions set goals and use methods suited to the age, sexual experience and culture of the student population³⁰. Positive results have also been associated with drug abuse prevention programs that are sensitive to the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the youths targeted³¹.

6-Last sufficiently long and/or provide "boosters". The brevity of many prevention programs—a couple of class sessions—may partly explain the fact that their impact tends to diminish over time. A longer period of instruction and "booster" sessions well after the initial instruction, increase the probabilities of effectiveness³².

7-Rely on well-trained teachers or adult leaders who believe in the program. Successful programs have properly trained instructors³³; in

²⁸ Gottfredson, *supra*, note 20 (1998); and Kirby, *supra*, note 20 (1997).

²⁹ Silvestri, *supra*, note 20 (1989); Kirby (1997), *supra*, note 20; and Dusenberry, *supra*, note 20 (1995).

³⁰ Kirby, *supra*, note 20 (1997).

³¹ Dusenberry, *supra*, note 20 (1995).

³² Dusenberry, *supra*, note 20 (1995); Stein, *supra*, note 27 (1999); Rooney, *supra*, note 20 (1996); and Kirby, *supra*, note 20 (1997).

³³ *Ibid.*

particular, the interventions that appear to work use teachers trained in conducting interactive sessions³⁴.

³⁴ Though this finding is intuitively obvious, its relevance has gone unnoticed by researchers until recently, reflecting the habitual inattention to program implementation.

4. FROM STUDIES TO SCHOOLROOMS: THE FAILURE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Many programs show promise when tried on a small scale under carefully controlled conditions. The critical policy question, though, is whether they are robust: that is, whether they can be implemented in a wide variety of classrooms with different kinds of students—whether they can be “scaled up”. The data are not encouraging.

Sociometrics Corporation’s ambitious foray into this realm tells a cautionary tale. In 1996, the nonprofit research organization set out to determine whether apparently effective pregnancy and HIV/AIDS education programs that had “worked” at least once could be packaged for reimplementa³⁵tion. A panel of experts selected thirty³⁵ programs, each of which had been shown, in an empirically credible study, to alter adolescents’ risky behaviors and to affect their values or attitudes toward risk-taking behavior³⁶. Materials from twenty-three of these programs were collected and packaged programs produced³⁷. Only twelve of the twenty-three programs were implemented a second time in school-based projects which (according to Sociometrics’ specifications) were supposed to enroll at least seventy students.

The results were both disappointing and informative. In only four sites were pre- and post-intervention student surveys conducted; not a single district reported statistically significant changes in the number

³⁵ Fifteen were primarily AIDS programs and fifteen were primarily pregnancy programs – four of those were aimed at preventing second pregnancies. Programs were designed for both school and community delivery. Neigo, Starr, M. Jane Park, Margaret S. Kelley, James Peterson, and Josefina J. Card. “The PASHA Field Test: A window into the practitioners world.” Los Altos, CA: Sociomentrics Corporation (1998); Card, Josefina, J., Starr Niego, Alisa Mallari, and William S. Farrell. “The Program Archive on Sexuality, Health, and Adolescence: Promising Prevention Programs in a Box” *Family Planning Perspectives*, 28:210-220 (1998).

³⁶ The latter criterion was only measured for programs aimed at students under 15 years of age. A demonstration of increasing knowledge was not deemed sufficient under this criterion; attitude or value change was required.

³⁷ The rights holders of the other seven programs declined requests to make their materials available.

of sexual partners, contraceptive use or STD prevention methods used by the students who participated in the project.

As well, the Sociometrics study revealed the difficulty of maintaining fidelity to implementation design when re-implementing a program. Despite having committed to participating in a study of specific programs, eight of the twelve districts changed key elements of the program they were reimplementing or omitted key elements entirely. The dropout rate was high: in some cases as few as twelve students finished the program.

In general, the kinds of programs that researchers believe to be successful in reducing risky behavior are not widely used. In shaping the choices that school districts make, aggressive marketing—which accounts for much of the cost of these programs—matters much more than research results.

The DARE drug prevention program, which is far and away the most widely used in the nation's public schools, is a case in point. The instructors are not teachers but uniformed police officers, 25,000 of them in 1997. The curriculum stresses building self-esteem and helping children assert their right to "just say no"³⁸.

DARE has been carefully evaluated several times: a 1994 review of eight leading studies; a 1995 examination of data from thirty-one elementary schools; and a 1996 report based on research that tracked ten thousand fifth grade students over a four year period. The findings have been consistently negative. "DARE's limited influence on adolescent drug-use behavior contrasts with the program's popularity and prevalence".³⁹.

³⁸ Elliot, Jeff, "America's 'Just Say No' Addiction". *Albion Monitor* (December 3, 1995).

³⁹ Ennet, Susan, et al., "How Effective is Drug Abuse Education? A Meta-Analysis of Project DARE Outcome Evaluations" *American Journal of Public Health* (September, 1994); Clayton, Richard, et al., "The Effectiveness of Drug Abuse Resistance Education (Project DARE): 5-Year Follow-up Results" *Preventive Medicine*, 25 (1996); and Suyapa, Silvia E. and Judy Thorne, "School Based Drug Prevention Programs: A Longitudinal Study in Selected School Districts". Chapel Hill: Research Triangle Institute (February 1997).

While other programs such as Life Skills Training do a better job of reducing drug use and promoting anti-drug attitudes⁴⁰, DARE continues to dominate the market. It's easy on teachers, since someone else does the teaching. When it was launched by Los Angeles police chief Daryl Gates, DARE offered an apparently powerful weapon in the Reagan Administration's War on Drugs. Since then, a masterful dissemination effort has kept it going. It is hard for any school system to resist the blandishments of "a program that hands out tax breaks to businesses and candy to kids," that is tied to the local police force, and that promotes itself with giveaways of T-shirts and diplomas⁴¹. The Oakland, California school district painfully learned that lesson: its decision to stop using the program led to a fire-storm of protest⁴².

DARE defenders have steam-rolled their critics, attacking a journal article that reported the findings of an evaluation that the organization itself funded, pressing the California Department of Education to disown a study critical of DARE⁴³ that the Department had underwritten⁴⁴. Even as DARE's critics proliferate, the program prospers. What began as a fifth grade intervention has been expanded to reach first through twelfth graders; now DARE includes an out-of-school as well as an in-school component. In spring 1999, California Governor Gray Davis included a \$1 million line appropriation earmarked specifically for DARE in the state budget.

⁴⁰ Gottfredson, Denise C. "School Based Crime Prevention," in *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising*, by Lawrence W. Sherman, Denise Gottfredson, Doris MacKenzie, John Eck, Peter Reuter, and Shawn Bushway. Washington, D.C.: US Department of Justice (1997, 1998). <http://www.preventingcrime.org/report/index.htm>.

⁴¹ Conrad, Chris. "City of Oakland Eliminates DARE by Unanimous Vote." (1995) <http://turnpike.net/~jnr/oakland.htm>.

⁴² *Ibid*; Lawton, Millicent. "Study of California Anti-Drug Education Programs Stirs Debate" *Education Week*, (November 22, 1995); and Miller, Laura, "Study Critical of Anti-Drug Program Called Flawed" *Education Week* (October 12, 1995).

⁴³ Brown, Joel, et al. "Students and Substances: Social Power in Drug Education" *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 19(1):65-82 (1997).

⁴⁴ At least DARE has been evaluated, unlike many substance abuse prevention programs.

In the domain of smoking, no single program dominates. Since the mid-1970s, a pedagogical approach that emphasizes peer and social influences, rather than the more traditional information-oriented approach or a combination of the two, has been commonly adopted⁴⁵. Early research appeared to support the social influences model, and contributed to its popularity. Institutional inertia has done the rest. However, a 1996 meta-analysis concludes that, when adjustments are made to adjust for the methodological problems that have plagued this research, the social influences strategy, by itself, has only limited effect⁴⁶.

By the time students are taught about sex in school, most of them have already acquired a street knowledge of, and many of them are personally well-versed in, the subject. Not surprisingly, the research on sex and AIDS education consistently shows that programs that strictly emphasize abstinence have no impact on teenagers' sexual behavior: they do not affect the incidence of sex, the number of sexual partners or the use of safer sex practices⁴⁷. Programs stressing condom use are considerably more effective in preventing pregnancy and the spread of HIV AIDS and other STDs. One particularly good study comparing an abstinence program with a safe sex program for inner city African Americans found the safe sex group students participating in the safe sex group were less likely to engage in sexual activity and more likely to use a condom 6-12 months following the intervention and in subsequent follow-ups⁴⁸. Conceivably, the safe sex program was more credible to adolescents.

⁴⁵ A psychological approach may have become predominant in nicotine-prevention programs, in contrast to the didactic approach prevalent in other drug-abuse programs such as DARE, because of society's different attitudes toward the different types of drugs. Illegal substances have been treated with a zero-tolerance policy on the street and in the classroom, while a more lenient stance has been used vis a vis smoking.

⁴⁶ Rooney, *supra*, note 20.

⁴⁷ National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, *supra*, note 20 (1998).

⁴⁸ *Ibid*; Jemmott, John B. III, Loretta Sweet Jemmott, and Geoffrey T. Fong. "Abstinence and safer sex HIV risk-reduction interventions for African American adolescents" *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 27(19);1529-1536 (1998); and Kirby, *supra*, note 20 (1998).

Despite this research, abstinence is the only message that many school-based prevention programs proffer. The proper use of the condom is taught in fewer than half the schools teaching HIV prevention⁴⁹. A quarter of schools with HIV education classes do not even refer to condoms as an alternative to abstinence, and many of these only point out--correctly but irrelevantly, given teenagers' behavior--that using condoms does not eliminate the risks of sex⁵⁰.

⁴⁹ The median percentage of schools across States that teaches the proper use of condoms is 48.3% across 34 States on which data was available. Center for Disease Control. "Characteristics of Health Education Among Secondary Schools -- School Health Education Profiles, 1996" (1998). <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/MMWRFfile/ss4704.htm>.

⁵⁰ While, on average, 94.3% of schools had HIV education, only 75.5% of those schools, on average, taught condom efficacy. *Ibid.*

5. WHY CHANGING "REAL SCHOOL" IS HARD TO DO

Ideas are plentiful; what's rare are effective strategies for translating them into practice. That proposition, which applies across the public policy landscape, is especially true in education and truer still in "risk prevention" education.

More than thirty years after the publication of the *Equal Educational Opportunity Survey* (commonly called the Coleman Report), the "technology" of instruction—that is, the relationship between resources, broadly understood, and student outcomes—remains weak. Strategies are complex: a reading or pregnancy prevention program is much more multi-faceted than, say, a sewage treatment program. As the history of the 1970s planned variation Head Start experiment and, more recently, the abandonment of a pedagogically pioneering school in the planned community of Celebration, Florida, show, parents are unwilling to submit themselves to educational "experiments; they insist, not unreasonably, on what they believe is best for their children.⁵¹ Students differ from one another in ways that may profoundly affect how they will respond to a program. The differences that matter—race, sex, ethnicity, culture, school achievement, motivation—vary with the aim of the program: in this respect, HIV education differs from instruction in reading.

Implementation of any new educational program is a multi-tiered process. It may involve the federal government (usually as a financial supporter, cheerleader, and information provider); it is likely to involve the state government; it may involve networks of school professionals working across organizations; it invariably involves the nation's fifteen thousand school districts. Decentralization allows for variation in implementation, so that programs can be adjusted to respond to local needs; it also invites greater-buy-in on the part of the street-level bureaucrats who put them in practice. In the field, however, the result of such decentralized decision-making has too often

⁵¹ See Ross, Andrew. *The Celebration Chronicles*. New York: Ballantine (1999).

been academic silliness: fishing trips and toy cop cars for students. Nor does the fledgling program stand alone. It must be linked to a host of ongoing activities—everything from racial integration to the education of students with disabilities—and related to the many, sometimes conflicting, demands that are placed on the schools.

Public education is a highly visible activity; and, since everyone has had an education, we all consider ourselves to be experts. Ideological battles are commonplace. "Critical thinking," outcomes-oriented instruction, evolution, the treatment of women (and white males) in American history texts, the permissibility of prayer, even the new math: all these and more have occasioned wars among the partisans⁵².

In reaching students, the classroom is the crucible; that means hundreds of thousands of teachers must first embrace, and then know how to enact, the program.⁵³ Veteran teachers have to be trained (as Charlie Brown once lamented, "how can I do the new math with an old math mind?")⁵⁴. The curricula of teacher training programs has to be revamped. Materials need to be kept up-to-date, new teachers have to be trained, students kept motivated, or else the program decays.

For all these and a thousand and one other reasons, what happens in the field may look nothing like what the program designer had in mind.

All of these implementation problems exist, in heightened form, in pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, violence, smoking, drinking and drug education programs.

⁵² See Kirp, David. "Textbooks and Tribalism in California." *Public Interest*, 104:20-42. (1991).

⁵³ Pauley, Edward, *The Classroom Crucible* (New York: Basic, 1991).

⁵⁴ As previously noted, teacher training is a particularly important element of success. The five HIV/AIDS programs identified by the Center for Disease Control as best practices require 2 to 3 days of teacher (or facilitator) training to be implemented effectively (see <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/rtc>). While almost all States provide teacher training on behavior change education, such as Alcohol- and other drug-use prevention, HIV prevention, pregnancy prevention, and tobacco-use prevention, very few teachers actually receive training on these subjects (Alcohol- and other drug-use 22.9%, HIV - 31%, pregnancy prevention - 5.7%, and tobacco-use - 9.3%. Center for Disease Control, *supra*, note 49, (1998).

Because these behavior change programs all deal with highly visible issues, they are especially subject to public scrutiny; the predictable consequence is to diminish the importance of professional judgments. Pregnancy/AIDS education is a good example. Even as messages that the research shows to be effective—reducing and making safer, rather than entirely abstaining from, sexual activity—cannot be delivered in many schools because they give offense to powerful constituencies, the only permissible lesson—an exclusive focus on abstinence—is one that is known to be ineffective.

While the tension between best practice and permissible practice is most visible in sex education, the postulate holds true for all kinds of health promotion education: the messages that are most effective stress harm reduction; those that are in widest circulation focus on prevention. Partisans of an absolutist approach may read the data differently; it is, after all, child's play to pick and choose among the findings of the myriad studies. Or else they treat empirical evidence as beside the point in designing policy. Though the left has its favored causes—notably the demand for instruction in the absolute evil of tobacco—social conservatives have been most deeply involved. Their ultimate intention is to confirm social norms of right behavior, and in that "scarlet "letter" manner influence conduct. If schools teach safe(r) sex practices, they contend, society's seal of approval is placed on behavior they regard as simply immoral. In this policy territory-- as in many others, such as abortion, needle exchange and gay rights--symbolic victories may matter as much as substantive outcomes. And because sex and drugs are hot-button issues for this constituency, social conservatives can muster the forces needed to affect local school boards' decisions.

Moreover, the structural elements of implementation-training, the evaluation of curricula and the like—have been especially badly handled in these prevention programs. During the past quarter-century, public schools have received lots of money to keep children chaste and drug-free but little guidance regarding how to spend it wisely. That has made it easy for the education hucksters to sell their wares, especially when, as with DARE, the product has ready appeal for students and

teachers. The best programs have mainly been developed by researchers who lack the taste or talent for promoting their product.

Teachers are usually called upon to teach these subjects without much training. Even when training is provided, it ignores the fact that many instructors, used to teaching the skills of soccer or parsing the sonnets of Shakespeare, find it excruciatingly difficult to talk with adolescents about condoms and binge drinking. Small wonder, then, that they prefer having policemen, rather than themselves, lecture on the perils of cocaine.

The expectation among those who design curricula is that their lesson plan will be dutifully followed. But time constraints (some programs require as many as seventeen sessions), dated materials (one expert commented that students could "not get past the hairstyles and clothes" present in the video of one "best practice" program), and a genuine desire to make the program more appropriate for their students (even if they are uniformed on "what works" in this difficult field) weaken implementation fidelity.

This hope for a "teacher-proof" curriculum is a familiar one in education—forty years ago it was a cornerstone of the Physical Sciences Study Committee (PSSC) high school physics course—but it is as unrealistic now as it was then. Such "creative" adaptations of out-of-the-box curricula are especially likely when the program is hard to teach, as is sometimes true of state-of-the-art offerings; or when the topic is one, like smoking, about which teachers feel they understand better than the experts; or one, like AIDS, about which teachers feel queasy. Those who prepare these curricula commonly bemoan this fact⁵⁵, but they would do better to adapt their program to on-the-ground reality.

⁵⁵ Dusenberry, *supra* note 20 (1995).

6. TAKE-HOME LESSONS

There are no easy answers, no magic bullets that will transform all school-based behavior change programs⁵⁶. Moreover, there are real differences concerning what are generally perceived as the goals of these programs. The message in drug, smoking and violence-related programs is "no;" for alcohol, "not yet." Concerning pregnancy and AIDS/HIV, there are multiple, conflicting and competing messages: "no"; "not yet"; "safer."

Still, something of value can be gleaned, policy lessons drawn, from this comparative overview of pregnancy, AIDS/HIV, tobacco, alcohol and drug education programs. At present, the course of instruction in most public schools compartmentalizes these risky behaviors into separate instructional packages, each with its own curriculum. The reasons for this demarcation have little to do with policy logic, everything to do with policy history and bureaucratic imperialism. (As is often the case, the bureaucracy is functional for the bureaucrats but not the society.)⁵⁷ Curtailing these problem behaviors became the responsibility of the schools at different times. Each has its own funding stream and its own advocates—its own bureaucratic entrepreneurs—inside the school system. It makes better sense to combine "prevention" or "behavior change" into a broader instructional regime focusing on the macro-level antecedents to risk-taking behavior⁵⁸.

⁵⁶ Kirby, *supra* note 20 (1997).

⁵⁷ Crozier, Michel. *The Bureaucratic Phenomenon*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1964); Benveniste, Guy. *Bureaucracy*. Berkeley: University of California Press (1983).

⁵⁸ Consolidation is most appropriate at what might be called the macro-level of instruction, which focuses on the antecedents to risk-taking behaviors such as sexual maturity, low self-esteem, and poverty. Social learning theories, on which many effective programs are based, teach us that behavior change requires (among other elements) motivation to avoid a consequence. By supporting a guiding students toward a positive view of the future, the consequences of risk-taking behavior become relatively less desirable.

At the micro-level, programs focus on topic-specific behaviors: how to persuade adolescents to use condoms or not to smoke. Program consolidation is less effective at this level. What seems to work best

The content of essential information varies with the subject matter, of course: how AIDS is transmitted, the relation between smoking and cancer, the consequences of hard drug use and the like. But the type of information that is useful is identical-specific, limited, useful and accurate⁵⁹—and so is the pedagogical challenge. These behaviors cluster into patterns. Essentially the same underlying factors prompt teenagers to experiment with sex, tobacco and drugs⁶⁰. Success in a broad-based health promotion program potentially generates a wider array of benefits—not just with respect to particular behaviors but also attitudes about risky behavior more generally—since it gives students a better picture of the scope of the danger and a stronger set of psychological tools with which to deal with that danger⁶¹. As Douglas Kirby, one of the leading researchers in pregnancy reduction education, has recently written:

One of the underlying principles [of broad-based approaches] is to help prepare young people for adult life, not just to keep them problem-free. The programs do this by improving adolescents' life skills and increasing their opportunities or "life options"....Although the studies of youth development

is a simple and straightforward, and uncluttered message—for instance, unprotected sex can lead to AIDS—rather than, say, a meticulous detailing of the etiology of AIDS. Douglas Kirby, "Reducing Adolescent Pregnancy: Approaches That Work" *Contemporary Pediatrics*, 16:1, 83-94 (1999).

⁵⁹ Accuracy increases credibility and may enhance the effectiveness of the program. The mere perception of exaggeration may undermine the effectiveness of the program. Consider, for example, the sexually active student that hears "unprotected sex WILL lead to pregnancy and HIV infection" and thinks to themselves, "I've had sex and not become pregnant or been infected."

⁶⁰ These reasons range from exploration, to need for acceptance, to boredom.

⁶¹ Conceivably it may affect their attitude toward school as well.

programs are {few}...the evidence to date suggests that these interventions may be effective⁶².

In short, consolidation of behavior change programs is likely to be the most pedagogically sensible and the most cost-effective approach to prevention. Since the federal legislation authorizes such comprehensive ventures, it is also a legally feasible, if politically challenging, reform.

Another sensible strategy is to concentrate prevention programs where the exposure to risk is greatest—that is, in communities with the highest incidence of teen pregnancy and HIV/AIDS, the highest rates of drug, alcohol and tobacco use, and violence. The populations most vulnerable to these risks vary: while minority adolescents are most likely to become pregnant and a relatively small number of neighborhoods have very high crime rates, problem drinking and smoking is a more widely dispersed concern⁶³.

Because knowledge of what works is scanty among those who actually decide which programs to adopt, dissemination of reliable information is critical. For AIDS and tobacco education, the Centers for Disease Control has prepared lists of exemplary programs—smart practices—and this dissemination strategy should be applied generally. The CDC's mission, which reaches across these domains of risk, as well as its reputation for conducting and promoting unbiased analysis, makes it a good choice as the lead federal agency. As well, private groups with reputations for high quality evaluation should become involved in this task⁶⁴.

A consolidated and concentrated prevention program, one in which the content is consistent with the principles that underlie effective instruction and the most efficacious curricula have been identified by a credible agency, has the potential to influence adolescent behavior. But

⁶² Kirby, *supra*, note 58, (1999).

⁶³ For examples of such programs, see Kirby, *supra*, note 58 (1999).

⁶⁴ Such groups already perform this role in reviewing the achievement tests that states are considering adopting on a statewide bases.

since the data are so scanty, there is no assurance that even this kind of program, if carefully undertaken on a broad scale, would survive a rigorous cost-effectiveness analysis.

Focusing on the subset of instructional activities that is described as encouraging behavior change or promoting health, without situating that instruction in the context of the larger school reform movement of the day, may turn out to be a futile venture. No matter how carefully conceived, the argument runs, such a program would remain a marginal, and hence ineffective, undertaking, isolated from the ordinary-and crucial-life of the school. Yet whatever the policy merits of such an argument, these programs are not going to disappear or be folded into the larger school reform movement; politically, they are far too strong for such a fate, whatever the data appear to show. Under those circumstances, the most useful policy question to pose isn't "What's ideal?" but "As compared to what?" or "What is best under the circumstances?"

One thing is certain. It is unrealistic to believe that, whatever the social problem of the day, the public schools can enact a quick fix—that, through the magic powers of pedagogy, America's public schools can bring our children back to a state of innocence⁶⁵. But despite mountains of evidence and centuries of experience, faith abides.

⁶⁵ Tyack, David and Larry Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press (1995).

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KNOWLEDGE, DEMOCRACY, AND EVIDENCE-BASED GOVERNMENT¹

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"This is a government by professionals and intellectuals. I repeat, intellectuals are good enough in their places, but a country run by professors is ultimately destined to Bolshevism and an explosion."

—Senator Lawrence Sherman, *Congressional Record*, 65th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 9875-9877, September 3, 1918, as cited in Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, New York.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963, pp. 212-213.

What is the best relationship between knowledge and democracy? The sentiment expressed above by Senator Lawrence Sherman (no relation to the author) during World War I indicates the long-standing tension around this question. Calvinists who founded America thought democratic processes should set goals, while knowledge specialists should decide how to accomplish those goals. But even before the Revolution, more egalitarian Protestant sects challenged this respect for erudition. Now, in an increasingly egalitarian age, many Americans view knowledge itself to be a democratic commodity, with citizens entitled not only to their own opinions, but to their own facts. That is, every citizen is entitled to decide what knowledge means and what kind of evidence constitutes knowledge of cause-and-effect relationships. This view is manifest in the widespread resentment of elite knowledge as a basis for policymaking and the reverence for intuitive inspiration of the people "in the trenches" who must face problems on a daily basis. In the words of Digby Baltzell, it is a matter of Puritanism versus Quakerism, of objective erudition versus the unschooled, subjective inspiration of the "inner light."²

¹Note: this paper is adapted from Lawrence W. Sherman, "The Safe and Drug Free Schools Program," pp. 125-156 and pp. 167-171 in Diane Ravitch, ed. *Brookings Papers on Education Policy*. Washington, D.C. Brookings Institution Press, 2000.

²Digby Baltzell, *Puritan Boston and Quaker Philadelphia*. New York: Free Press, 1979.

This conflict lies at the core of the new federalism. Who knows best how to fix the nation's problems, the knowledge elites of the federal government in Washington or the grass-roots leaders of local government? Since the administration of Lyndon Johnson, elected officials of both parties have increasingly chosen the latter answer. As public confidence in Washington has plummeted,³ more power to spend federal funds has been passed down to state and local leaders. There is substantial evidence that Americans have more confidence in their local governments to fix public problems than they do in Washington.⁴ But there is scant evidence that local officials can actually achieve more success than federal officials. In coming years, the evidence on the question of achievement will begin to accumulate on a wide range of programs, from welfare reform to Medicaid.

One early result is the evidence on the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program. As a crucial test of grass-roots control, the news is pretty bad. Since 1986, this program has given more than \$6 billion to some 15,000 local school districts and 50 state governors to spend largely at their own discretion. There is no evidence that this half-billion-dollar-per-year program has made schools any safer or more drug-free. There is ample evidence that much of the money has been wasted on performing magicians, fishing trips, and school concerts—and on methods (such as counseling) that research shows to be ineffective. Both the Office of Management and Budget and the Congressional Budget Office have tried to kill this program. Yet both Republican and Democratic presidents have joined with opposition parties in Congress to keep the program alive.

This paper explores the causes of, and alternatives to, the democratized waste of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools funding. The causes are linked to the politics of "symbolic pork," or the spending of money on problems without needing to show any outcome. This paper documents that claim with respect to the Safe and Drug-Free Schools

³Gary Orren, "Fall From Grace: The Public's Loss of Faith in Government." in Joseph F. Nye, Philip D. Zelikow, and David C. King, eds., *Why People Don't Trust Government*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997, pp. 81, 83.

⁴Orren, p. 83.

Program, then considers alternative ways to restructure the program to increase its effectiveness. One alternative is an FDA-style, Washington-driven program based on the best knowledge available nationwide. Another is a local accounting model, in which every community develops performance and results measures for every expenditure. A third alternative, which I define as "evidence-based government," combines the best national knowledge with the best local outcome measures in a participatory process of accountability for risk-adjusted results.⁵

Whether a Washington-led program of research-based best practices for school safety could have made schools any safer is hard to say. The idea of a federally approved menu of proven practices, with all policies tested for their safety and effectiveness, is similar to the model of a Food and Drug Administration. Yet applying such a menu on a national scale presumes both the resources to support sufficient research and the generalizability of research results from the test-site communities to all or many other communities. Congress has never appropriated funds for the former, and many Americans refuse to believe the latter. Local leaders clearly prefer knowledge based on "our town" rather than on someone else's town, on the premise that every community is unique. This problem does not occur only in drug-abuse prevention; it is endemic in all educational issues and probably all areas of social policy.

That premise suggests the local accounting model, in which each community invests in measurement of the impact of its federal expenditures. This approach, repeatedly advocated by President George W. Bush during his campaign in the context of educational testing, is generally exemplified by the "reinventing government" philosophy of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1994. This law (at the federal level) calls on all government agencies to name their criteria for success and then report on how well they meet those criteria.⁶ Under this model, school safety, or even achievement-test scores, could

⁵Lawrence W. Sherman, *Evidence-Based Policing, Second Ideas in American Policing Lecture*, Police Foundation, Washington, D.C., 1998.

⁶David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector*. NY: Penguin, 1993.

be compared across different policies to find the most effective way to accomplish each goal. Trends in outcomes before and after the introduction of new policies may provide some clue to the success of those policies, but this approach yields very weak evidence on cause and effect. Moreover, it disregards the huge differences in the level of risk of crime—and of academic failure—between one school and another, or one school district and another.

The paper concludes with a model of evidence-based government that draws on both national and local evidence to compare the actual performance of schools with their expected performance outcomes, given the social context in which their students live. This is arguably the only fair way to compare outcomes across units of government and to show the "value-added" difference that each unit can make with its raw material. By comparing the difference schools make for their students, and not just the qualities students bring to school, federal programs can help reward the best practices that each school can undertake in its own context.

PROLOGUE: SYMBOLIC PORK, KNOWLEDGE AND DEMOCRACY

The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) is part of a larger group of programs that arguably constitute "symbolic pork." These programs differ from traditional pork-barrel funds, which bring jobs or tangible benefits such as construction projects to one Congressional district at a time. Symbolic pork puts money into every Congressional district to symbolize federal concern about a problem, regardless of what effect the money has—or how small the amounts of money may be. Each member of Congress gets to say that he or she has voted for the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program whenever constituents complain about crime or drugs in schools. By this logic, no member of Congress could ever vote against such funding, which by implication suggests indifference to problems of school safety and drug abuse. Nor can they easily vote to limit grass-roots control of the money, after a decade of predictable funding.

This analysis begins with a description of the framework of national-evidence government: the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) metaphor. If there were an FDA for school-based interventions, what would it say about each proposed program or tactic for preventing school violence and drugs? Guided by solely the best evidence available, what can one conclude about the severity and shape of the problems? Given the shape of the problems and the available policy evaluations, which, if any, policies are supported by sufficient evidence that they can reduce the prevalence or severity of those problems? If we were to design an effective program to be run from Washington that could pass FDA-type approval based on the best national knowledge available, what would it look like? On what principles would the resources be allocated, how would we decide what works, and how would specific prevention methods be selected? While the knowledge base needed to answer these questions does not exist, federal policy could proceed to create such knowledge.

The second section is a case study in symbolic pork. It shows how the legislative design of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program

disconnected it from both ends and means—the program's goals and the best methods for accomplishing them. It shows how Executive branch officials tried and failed to make the program more evidence-based within the severe limitations of the legislation. It then describes how grass roots decisions have spent program funds on everything from toy police cars to Disneyland tickets. The section concludes by comparing research evidence to spending as a "portfolio analysis" of the program's return on investment.

The third section recommends amendments to the legislation that could move it from symbolic pork to evidence-based government. These recommendations suggest more democracy in the use of knowledge, rather than in its definition. They suggest combining both national knowledge and local outcome data to give local officials the information they need to govern effectively. Whether federal funding and assistance could spawn such an effort remains to be seen.

1. PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS: EVIDENCE-BASED ANALYSIS

Most schools are safe, although few are drug free. The causes of violence and drug abuse are largely external to the schools themselves, although school management can make a moderate contribution to preventing those problems. Substantial research evidence suggests that putting the right kinds of programs into high-risk schools could succeed in making schools somewhat safer and more drug free. While far more research is still needed, we also know that some "old favorite" local methods are ineffective.

The problem of school violence is heavily concentrated in a small number of schools in urban poverty areas. Although the recent spectacular, but needle-in-the-haystack, mass murders have occurred in non-urban schools, fixing the problem in urban schools would largely solve the entire problem. Mass murders at schools have increased slightly in recent years, but overall rates of violent injury of high school students have remained virtually unchanged since 1985.

Drug abuse is more widespread than violence, but it is only moderately linked to schools. Most students who use drugs do so off school property. Schools are more commonly used for the exchange of drugs than for their consumption. Marijuana use by high school seniors in any location has fallen and risen since 1985; cocaine use has fallen and stayed down; and hallucinogen use has risen.

Although the causes of these problems are mostly beyond school walls, and schools can at best have only moderate effects on them, there is a tendency in national politics to assume that schools succeed or fail on the merits of their own management, regardless of the problems of the families and communities they serve. But there is evidence about the kinds of policies that can achieve those moderate effects. This section uses the best evidence about the problems, causes, and solutions to design an ideal, politics-free federal policy for spending \$500 million per year to foster safe and drug-free schools.

THE PROBLEMS

Violence in Schools

On average, American schools are among the safest places on earth. While the number of mass-murder incidents nationwide rose from two in 1992-1993 to six in 1997-1998, the overall murder rate has always been far lower than that in environments outside schools. In 1992-1994, the murder rate for children in schools was less than 0.45 per 100,000 person-years.⁷ The overall U.S. homicide rate in those years was about 9 per 100,000, 20 times higher than the rate in schools.⁸ The murder rate of children outside of school was over 20 per 100,000.⁹ Thus American children are, on average, 44 times more likely to be murdered outside of school than they are in school. Moreover, they are far safer sitting in American schools than they are living in such low-homicide countries as England, Australia, and New Zealand.¹⁰

Not all children are created equal in their risk of being murdered, either in school or out. School violence, like serious violence in

⁷During those two years, 63 students aged 5 though 19 were murdered. The denominator for these murders was about 50 million students in school for about 6 hours per day (after adjusting for absenteeism) for about 200 days per year X 2 years = 2400 hours per student. Since one full person-year = 365 days X 24 hours = 8760 hours, each student represented an estimated .274 person-years (2400/8760 = .274) X 50 million = 13,698,630 person-years. The rate of murder was therefore .45 per 100,000 person-years. This overstates the rate by about 50%, since almost all murders are committed against people who are awake at the time, and the person year calculation assumes that people never go to sleep. If we assume people sleep about one-third of each day, the corrected rate of homicide is only 0.30 per 100,000. These calculations were derived from raw data in *Annual Report on School Safety, 1998*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education (Hereinafter cited as *Annual Report*), p. 9.

⁸Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States: The Uniform Crime Report, 1992, 1993, 1994*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.

⁹The obverse of the calculation of the school-hours denominator is that the 50 million students spent 0.726 of their time (1-.274 = 0.726) = 36,300,000 person years out of school. During those years, (7,357 - 63) = 7294 children aged 5 to 19 were murdered out of school, for a rate of 20.09 per 100,000. *Annual Report*, p. 9.

¹⁰Heather Strang, *Homicide in Australia, 1990-91*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology, 1993.

general, is heavily concentrated in highly segregated neighborhoods where most adults are out of the labor force.¹¹

Homicide rates in some urban neighborhoods reach 180 per 100,000 person-hours¹²—20 times the national homicide rate and almost 400 times the risk of murder in school. Fully 90 percent of all 109,000 schools nationwide report not one serious violent incident in a year. But 17 percent of schools in cities report at least one incident, compared with 11 percent on the urban fringe, 8 percent of rural schools, and 5 percent of schools in small towns.¹³ Since these figures do not control for the size of the student population in each school, it is possible that the per-capita rates of violence do not vary as much as the per-school rates. Nonetheless, school management is school-based, and schools with violence have different management problems than do schools without violence.

High schools and middle schools carry most of the risk of violence. In 1996–1997, 21 percent of high schools and 19 percent of middle schools reported at least one serious violent event; only 4 percent of elementary schools did. Again, elementary schools usually have fewer students than schools for older children, so the per-capita rates are not comparable. But this difference also tracks the age structure of serious violence outside of school.

Schools are more dangerous for teachers than for students. While students are victimized by serious violent acts at the rate of about 10 per 1,000 per year, teachers face more than twice that rate. Teachers in urban school are victimized at the rate of 39 incidents per 1,000, compared with 20 per 1,000 in suburban schools and 22 per 1,000 in rural schools.¹⁴ The rate of violence against students in schools has

¹¹See generally, William J. Wilson, *When Work Disappears*, 1996; Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993.

¹²Lawrence W. Sherman and Dennis P. Rogan, "Effects of Gun Seizures on Gun Violence: Hot Spots Patrol in Kansas City". *Justice Quarterly*, vol. 12: 673–693, at 679.

¹³Annual Report, p. 11.

¹⁴Annual Report, p. 10.

remained remarkably constant over the past 15 years despite the national doubling in the overall juvenile homicide rate during that time.¹⁵

That conclusion is evident in the prevalence of high school seniors who reported to the annual University of Michigan survey that in the past 12 months, while they were "at school (inside or outside or on a school bus)" they had been injured with a weapon "like a knife, gun or club." While Table 1 shows that there is a disproportionate concentration of injuries among black seniors (which would be even higher absent the higher dropout rate among inner-city students), it also shows virtually no substantial change in rates of violence since the original Drug-Free Schools and Communities program started in 1987.

Table 1
Seniors Injured by Weapons at School (percentage)¹⁶

Year	All Students	All Male	All Black
1987	4.9	7.7	5.6
1988	4.7	7.8	9.0
1989	5.6	8.0	11.3
1990	5.8	8.9	10.0
1991	6.5	8.7	9.6
1992	5.1	8.1	5.2
1993	4.7	7.0	6.4
1994	4.7	7.8	8.1
1995	4.9	7.5	8.7
1996	4.9	6.7	9.8
1997	5.2	7.9	7.1

These rates of injury may seem high, but they are comparable to national rates. In 1995, the national rate of victimization by all violent crime was 5 incidents per 100 people. For crimes of violence with injury, the national rate for all ages was 1 incident per 100, but

¹⁵Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States: The Uniform Crime Reports*. (annual) Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

¹⁶Source: Lloyd D. Johnston, et al, *Monitoring the Future*, as reported in Kathleen Maguire and Ann Pastore, eds., *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics 1997*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 1998, pp. 205-209.

for persons aged 16 to 19, it was 3.3 per 100.¹⁷ The violence problem in general is heavily concentrated among young men and has been for centuries—both in and out of schools.¹⁸

Public perceptions of the school violence problem may be driven less by these rates than by anecdotal evidence. The national concern over mass murders in schools clearly increases the perception that all schools are dangerous, at-risk environments. But from a policy perspective, the school mass-murder incident is a needle in a haystack. It is virtually impossible to predict where such incidents will occur, despite the tendency to have 20-20 hindsight about the predictability of each event after it has happened.¹⁹ From a political perspective, extreme cases reaffirm the need for a program to deal with the problem of unsafe schools, regardless of how safe they are in any objective sense.

Drug Use in Schools. Drug use in schools appears to be more prevalent and more widespread than violent crime, but it is still limited to a small fraction of all students. More than 91 percent of all high school students and some two-thirds of current users of marijuana say they do not use marijuana on school property. More common is the acquiring of drugs on school property. The CDC Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) for 1995 reported that 32 percent of all high school students had been offered or given, or had sold, an illegal drug on school property. This figure varies little by race: 31.7 percent of whites, 28.5 percent of blacks, and 40.7 percent of Hispanics.²⁰

These data do not provide separate estimates for inner-city schools, so we cannot directly compare the shape of the drug problem to

¹⁷ Kathleen Maguire and Ann Pastore, eds., *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1997*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 1998, pp. 178-181.

¹⁸ James Q. Wilson and Richard Herrnstein, *Crime and Human Nature*. N.Y. 1985.

¹⁹ Sheryl Gay Stolberg, "By The Numbers: Science Looks at Littleton, and Shrugs." *New York Times*, May 9, 1999, section 4, p. 1.

²⁰ Kathleen Maguire and Ann Pastore, *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1997*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 1998. (<http://www.albany.edu/sourcebook/>), p. 234.

the shape of the violence problem. We can, however, replicate the analysis of where children are at risk for these problems, and whether schools are above or below the average risk for any location in their communities. While some 42 percent of students claimed to have used marijuana at least once in their lifetime, and 25 percent report current use, only 8.8 percent report current marijuana use (any time in the last 30 days) on school property. This latter figure also varies little by race, at 7 percent for whites and around 12 percent for blacks and Hispanics. Overall, the data suggest that schools may be largely drug-free even when their students are not. The data on drug transfers suggests that schools may be more a marketplace for drugs than a place for their consumption. That might still be a damning indictment if we believed that students could get drugs only at school. But the widespread availability of drug markets outside school suggests that drug-free schools might never create drug-free students. Even so, availability of drugs at school does make some difference. Controlling for individual propensity to use drugs, individual decisions to use drugs increase when more students in a school say that drugs are easy to buy there.²¹

Surveys of high school seniors conducted each year since 1985 show that few changes have occurred in their drug use over the most recent 12 months since the advent of the program in 1987 (see Table 2).

THE CAUSES

The causes of youth violence and drug abuse in schools have only a modest connection to the way schools are run. The fact that most youth violence occurs outside schools suggests that schools actually do a good job of protecting students against violence for 7 hours a day. The best predictor of the safety of a school is the safety of its neighborhood.²² Once the effect of neighborhood violence rates is controlled, there is

²¹Gary D. Gottfredson, "Exploration of Adolescent Drug Involvement: Report to the National Institute of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency, U.S Department of Justice". Grant No. 87-JN-CX-0015 (Johns Hopkins University, Center for the Social Organization of Schools, Johns Hopkins University, 1988).

²²Denise Gottfredson, *Schools and Delinquency*. New York: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming, chapter 3.

Table 2
High School Seniors Using Drugs Past 12 Months (percentage)²³

Year	Percentage of High School Seniors		
	Marijuana	Cocaine	Hallucinogens
1985	40.6	13.1	6.3
1986	38.8	12.7	6.0
1987	36.3	10.3	6.4
1988	33.1	7.9	5.5
1989	29.6	6.5	5.6
1990	27.0	5.3	5.9
1991	23.9	3.5	5.8
1992	21.9	3.1	5.9
1993	26.0	3.3	7.4
1994	30.7	3.6	7.6
1995	34.7	4.0	9.3
1996	35.8	4.9	10.1
1997	38.5	5.5	9.8

little (although some) variability remaining in the safety of each school. Only some of that variability can be explained by the way the schools are run. Smaller schools are safer than larger schools. Schools with a sense of community and strong administrative leadership are safer than schools that lack these characteristics. It may be easier to create a sense of community in smaller schools, but size is only one factor in school climate.

The pessimistic view of the high correlation between community problems and school problems is compositional: The composition-i.e., the kinds of students at each school-determines the school's level of violence and drug abuse. Much as the first Coleman report emphasized family factors in determining educational achievement, this view says that family and background factors of students shape the school safety climate and overwhelm good educators.²⁴ According to this argument, it is futile to modify schools if the community is the prime source of

²³Kathleen Maguire and Ann Pastore, eds., *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1997*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 1998, p. 237.

²⁴Coleman, J., Campbell, E., Hobson, C., McPartland, J., Mood, A., Weinfield, F., & York, R. *Equality of educational opportunity*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. 1966.

school problems; modifying communities and their families would be far more effective and would naturally improve the schools.

Good evidence against that view comes from Gottfredson and Gottfredson's 1985 analysis of 1976 crime data from more than 600 secondary schools.²⁵ This study measured characteristics of communities, students, and schools. Schools were measured through interviews with students, teachers, and principals. The analysis shows that community structural characteristics (such as rates of unemployment and single-parent households) and student compositional characteristics (such as the number of parents in each student's home) were so highly correlated that they could not be separately estimated. Even after these characteristics were controlled for, however, school climate still varied—and had a clear effect on rates of victimization in schools. For junior high schools, community factors explained 54 percent of the variance in victimization of teachers, while school factors explained an additional 12 percent. Community factors explained only 5 percent of the variance in junior high school victimization of students, while school effects explained 19 percent. Thus depending on the measure, school effects can be even greater than compositional or community effects on junior high school crime rates.

School effects are somewhat weaker for senior high schools, but still important. Community factors explain 43 percent of the variance in teacher victimization rates, while school factors explain an additional 18 percent of the variance. For student victimization rates, community factors explain 21 percent of the variance, while school effects explain another 6 percent of the variance.

If school characteristics matter, which ones affect rates of crime the most? Gottfredson and Gottfredson found that three general factors may be responsible for lower crime rates: school size and resources, governance, and student socialization. Specifically, schools have less teacher victimization, independent of community context, when they have

- More teaching resources

²⁵Gary D. Gottfredson and Denise C. Gottfredson, *Victimization in Schools*. NY: Plenum, 1985.

- Smaller total enrollment (junior high schools) or total different students taught per teacher (senior high schools)
- More consistent and fair discipline
- Less democratic teacher attitudes toward parent and student control (junior high schools only)
- Less-punitive teacher attitudes
- More teacher-principal cooperation (senior high schools only)
- Higher student expectations that rules will be enforced (junior high schools) and greater commitment to conventional rules (senior high schools)

Similar factors were also found to affect rates of student victimization, especially perceptions of the fairness and consistency of school discipline.²⁶

Despite the independent effect of school factors on crime, it is important to stress that school management is highly correlated with community characteristics. The most disorganized schools are found in the most disorganized communities. Does this mean that schools cannot be improved to reduce crime? No. But it does reflect the size of the challenge faced by any policy trying to produce that result. That challenge can be met more effectively on the basis of experimental and quasi-experimental research that has compared a wide range of different strategies for enhancing school capacity to prevent crime and drug abuse.

THE SOLUTIONS

Consider this question: On the basis of the evidence just reviewed, how should this country spend \$500 million per year to foster safe and drug-free schools? Note that the question is not how much, if any, money to spend on this objective. Evidence-based government could help rank the relative importance of different issues and could even help allocate resources among them. Yet those decisions are increasingly the result of evidence-based politics, driven by opinion-

²⁶D.C. Gottfredson, *Schools and Delinquency*. New York: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming, chapter 3.

poll data, which is just another technology in the long history of democracy.²⁷ Taken together, the evidence about causes and effects of the urban concentration of violence suggests redirecting the Safe and Drug-Free Schools money to a general reconstruction of community, family, housing, and labor markets in small areas of the 54 cities producing over half of all the homicides in America.²⁸ But that option, for now, is off the table. If the money is inevitably to be spent on schools, we can still use the best evidence to design the best program. Doing that requires matching resources to risks, learning what works, and crafting policy from evidence.

Matching Resources to Risks

The evidence shows highly uneven risks of school violence, with most found in a small percentage of schools that have known characteristics. The evidence is less clear about the concentration of drug abuse. Thus it may make sense to split the efforts for controlling drugs and violence. This requires some criterion for weighting the relative importance of the two problems. One criterion is cost to the taxpayers. Each nonfatal gun injury results in an estimated \$20,000 in medical costs, most of which are borne by taxpayers. The number of drug-related auto accidents or violent crimes is much harder to estimate. But a 50-50 split between the two problems is probably as good an estimate as any.

Where should this country spend \$250 million annually to foster safer schools? The evidence suggests that we should put the money where the crime is, concentrating most of the funds in the schools with most of the violence, generally located in urban poverty areas. This strategy is made easier by the relative lack of resources in many of the most dangerous schools. The evidence on how to allocate the funds would have to be gathered carefully to ensure that schools do not increase

²⁷Robert Dahl, *On Democracy*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press.

²⁸Lawrence W. Sherman, Denise Gottfredson, Doris MacKenzie, John Eck, Shawn D. Bushway, & Peter Reuter. *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 1997, 1998 (<http://www.preventingcrime.org>).

crime reporting just to get more money. Police records on neighborhood crime rates might be a better source of data.

Where should this country spend \$250 million annually to foster drug-free schools? The evidence suggests that this objective might require far broader distribution of funds than would be required for violence prevention. Nonetheless, there is an ample literature on the inequitable support for education across school districts. It is also possible that serious drug problems may be as concentrated as serious violence, in a handful of urban poverty areas. If federal funds are to make the most difference, there is still a question of whether all school districts should be funded equally per student or funded on the basis of some measure of risk, given each school's constraints. The "old" federalism would require extensive paperwork to demonstrate each school's need, as well as a comprehensive proposal for federal officials to review. But that is just what grass-roots solutions reject. Using a wealth of measures of drug use, either NIDA or the Office for National Drug Control Policy could assign a risk level to every one of the 15,000 school districts in the nation and create three levels of risk: high, medium, and low. Then, something like 60 percent of the funds could be assigned to the high-risk districts, 30 percent to the medium-risk districts, and 10 percent to the low-risk districts.

In a political process, it is rarely possible to match resources to risks, especially when the need is greatest among those with the least political power. But whatever principle is used to allocate resources across schools, the next question is how to spend the money in each school. Grass-roots political theory says each school or district should make that decision, without Washington telling them what to do. Evidence-based government says whoever makes the decision should do it based on good evidence. But doing that requires a clear definition of terms: In learning what works, what constitutes good evidence?

Learning What Works

Three schools of thought about evaluation research have emerged in recent years: the mainstream evaluation community, program advocates who reject the legitimacy of external evaluation, and antinomian critics

of the scientific method. Each group has its own view about how we should learn what works, but all three agree that once we learn it, we should do more of it.

Mainstream evaluators continue to believe that good science and reliable measurement can tell us more about cause and effect than can the opinions of people delivering the programs. This group—which includes the author—continues to press for randomized field trials, multisite replication, testing and refinement of microprocesses, and theory-based programs. Many in this group would prefer to join qualitative process evaluations with controlled impact analysis, although they are often accused of caring only for the latter. Their view of how to scale up from pilot to national programs is cautious, with a preference for an incremental process of testing at each level of larger scale.

Program advocates learn what works from personal experience. They make things happen with remarkable success, overcoming obstacles that might restrain the growth of their programs. Evaluation is one such obstacle. They would not work so hard for their programs if they had any doubt as to the program's benefits. That viewpoint inevitably makes evaluation at best a distraction, and at worst a threat. Advocates often ask elected officials to observe their programs firsthand, to talk to staff and clients, to hear the testimonials and feel the enthusiasm. That method of evaluation, to them, is a far more reliable indicator of success than whatever statistics might show, since statistics can show anything. Both this viewpoint and that of the evaluators have been around for decades, and both are predictable.²⁹

The newest school of thought may be called the antinomian (literally "against laws") critics of the scientific method. Lisbeth Schorr is an articulate exponent of this viewpoint, which stresses the difficulty of placing comprehensive, flexible programs into a controlled test.³⁰ The basic argument is that variability is essential to program

²⁹Carol H. Weiss, *Evaluation Research: Methods of Assessing Program Effectiveness*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972.

³⁰Lisbeth B. Schorr, *Common Purpose: Strengthening Families and Neighborhoods to Rebuild America*. NY: Anchor Books, 1997.

success, but inimical to controlled testing—therefore controlled tests should be abandoned in favor of less-rigorous research designs. Low-internal-validity designs are the only research possible for the kind of multitreatment, comprehensive, one-size-does-not-fit-all interventions that are needed. Tom Loveless has applied this perspective to education policy research, arguing against anyone trying to define "best practices" based on research results. He also stresses the responsiveness of each teacher to each student, arguing against research-based policy which by definition constrains that virtue.³¹

From the perspective of mainstream evaluation, the antinomian view confuses the limitations of inadequate research funding with inadequate methods of science. The primary reason that variability within a treatment group is problematic for evaluation is limited research funding. With larger sample sizes, more resources for consultation with practitioners, and other resources, the scientific method can use controlled tests of many variations and combinations of strategies. "Solomon" designs with 10 or 20 different treatment groups can be taken out of the laboratory and put into field tests if there is enough money and time to enlist the partnership and commitment of teachers. With 14,000 police agencies, 15,000 school districts, 109,000 schools, and more than 1,000,000 classrooms, there are more than enough cases for analysis. Even in big cities, where the numbers of governments get smaller, the number of contact points remains enormous.

Evidence-based government takes its inspiration (and its name)³² from evidence-based medicine. That nascent field faces similar debates among evaluators, doctors, and antinomian critics of randomized trials. Yet it persists in seeking elegant simplicity for clarification of evidence, with a five-point scale of the strength of each study supporting each choice of medical treatment.³³ Similarly, the University

³¹ Tom Loveless, "The Use and Misuse of Research in Educational Reform." pp. 279-317 in Diane Ravitch, Editor, *Brookings Papers on Educational Policy*, 1998. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

³² Lawrence W. Sherman, "Evidence-Based Policing." Second Ideas in American Policing Lecture. Washington, DC: Police Foundation, 1998.

³³ Michael Millenson, *Demanding Medical Excellence*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

of Maryland's Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice recently employed a five-point scale to rank the strength of evidence from each evaluation of crime prevention practices.³⁴ This scale was employed in a Congressionally mandated review of the effectiveness of the \$4 billion in state and local crime prevention assistance administered by the U.S. Department of Justice. The law required that the review "employ rigorous and scientifically recognized standards and methodologies."³⁵

Following that mandate, the Maryland Report defined its scientific methods scale as follows:

Level 1: Correlation between a crime prevention program and a measure of crime or crime risk factors at a single point in time.

Level 2: Temporal sequence between the program and the crime or risk outcome clearly observed, or a "comparison" group present without demonstrated comparability to the treatment group.

Level 3: Before-and-after comparison of two or more units of analysis, one with and one without the program.

Level 4: Before-and-after comparison of multiple units with and without the program, controlling for other factors, or a with a nonequivalent comparison group that has only minor differences evident.

Level 5: Random assignment and analysis of comparable units to program and comparison groups.

Using this scale, the report then classified all crime prevention programs (defined as local methods, not federal funding "streams") for which sufficient evidence was available. The categories were *what works*, *what doesn't work*, and *what's promising*. Any program that did not meet the following standards was left in the residual category of *what's unknown*.

³⁴Lawrence W. Sherman, et al, *Preventing Crime*.

³⁵U.S. House of Representatives, 104th Congress, 1st Session, Report 104-378, Sec. 116.

What Works. These are programs that we are reasonably certain prevent crime or reduce risk factors for crime in the kinds of social contexts in which they have been evaluated, and for which the findings should be generalizable to similar settings in other places and times. Programs coded as "working" by this definition must have at least two level 3 evaluations with statistical significance tests and the preponderance of all available evidence showing effectiveness.

What Doesn't Work. These are programs that we are reasonably certain fail to prevent crime or reduce risk factors for crime, based on the identical scientific criteria used for deciding what works.

What's Promising. These are programs for which the level of certainty from available evidence is too low to support generalizable conclusions, but for which there is some empirical basis for predicting that further research could support such conclusions. Programs are coded as "promising" if they are found effective in at least one level 3 evaluation and the preponderance of the evidence.

What's Unknown. Any program not classified in one of the three above categories is defined as having unknown effects.

The weakest aspect of this classification system is that it provides no standard means for determining exactly which variations in program content and setting might affect generalizability. In the current state of science, that can be accomplished only by the accumulation of many tests in many settings with all major variations on the program theme. None of the programs reviewed for the Maryland report had accumulated such a body of knowledge. The conclusions about what works and what doesn't should therefore be read as valid only to the extent that the conditions of the field tests can be replicated in other settings. The greater the differences between evaluated programs and other programs using the same name, the less certain or generalizable the conclusions of any report must be.

Within these limitations, Denise Gottfredson reviewed available evidence on the programs designed to reduce violence and drug use in schools. That study, available at <http://www.preventingcrime.org>, was not an evaluation of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program. But its

results can serve as a basis for an evidence-based program to accomplish those goals.

What Works In Prevention. Given the research on the causes of drug abuse and violence, it is not surprising that most of the effective programs treat the "whole school" and do not just supplement the curriculum. Building on social organization theory, these programs have taken the holistic approach that all aspects of school life can affect violence and substance abuse. Whether school starts on time, for example, can affect student perceptions of whether discipline is fair and consistent, which in turn can affect the level of crime and drug abuse. The specific conclusions Gottfredson reached about what works are following:

1. Building school capacity to initiate and sustain innovation through the use of school "teams" or other organizational development strategies works to reduce delinquency and is promising for reducing substance abuse.³⁶
2. Clarifying and communicating norms about behavior through rules, reinforcement of positive behavior, and schoolwide initiatives (such as campaigns against bullying) reduce crime and delinquency,³⁷ as well as substance abuse.³⁸

³⁶D. Gottfredson, "An Empirical Test of School-Based Environmental and Individual Interventions to Reduce the Risk of Delinquency Behavior," *Criminology*, Vol. 24, 1986, pp. 705-731; D. Gottfredson, "An Evaluation of an Organization Development Approach to Reducing School Disaster" *Evaluation Review*, vol. 11, 1987, pp. 739-763; and D. Kenney and T. Wilson, "Reducing Fear in Schools: Managing Conflicts through Student Problem Solving," *Education and Urban Society*, vol. 28, 1996, pp. 436-455.

³⁷Mayer, et al., "Preventing School Vandalism and Improving Discipline: A Three Year Study," *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, vol. 16, 1983, pp. 355-369; D. Olweus, "Bully/Victim Problems among Schoolchildren: Basic Facts and Effects of a School Based Intervention Program" in D.J. Pepler and K.H. Rubin, ed. *The Development and Treatment of Childhood Aggression*, Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers, 1991; and D. Olweus, "Bullying among Schoolchildren: Intervention and Prevention" in R.D. Peters, R.J. McMahon, and V.L. Quinsey, eds. *Aggression and Violence throughout the Life Span*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1992.

³⁸Institute of Medicine, *Reducing Risks for Mental Disorders: Frontiers for Preventive Intervention Research*. Washington: National Academy Press, 1994; W. B. Hansen and J. W. Graham, "Preventing Alcohol,

3. Social-competency-skills curricula, such as Life Skills Training (LST), which teach over a long period of time such skills as stress management, problem-solving, self-control, and emotional intelligence, reduce delinquency and substance abuse.³⁹

4. Training or coaching in "thinking" skills for high risk youth using behavior-modification techniques or rewards and punishments reduces substance abuse.⁴⁰

What Doesn't Work. The list of what doesn't work includes some of the most popular attempts at prevention that have been developed and promoted by strong advocates. These programs are in widespread use in schools, both with and without federal funding. They are based on what appear to their advocates to be reasonable theories, and they produce strong anecdotal evidence. But they all fail to show prevention effects in at least two studies at the Maryland scale level 3 or higher. The following interventions were found to be ineffective:

1. Counseling and peer counseling of students fail to reduce substance abuse or delinquency and can even increase delinquency.⁴¹

Marijuana, and Cigarette Use among Adolescents: Peer Pressure Resistance Training versus Established Conservative Norms," *Preventative Medicine*, vol. 20, 1991. [see D. Gottfredson, "School-Based Crime Prevention" in L.W. Sherman et al., *Preventing Crime*, 1997, pp. 5-17 to 5-20].

³⁹Botvin, et al, "A Cognitive Behavioral Approach to Substance Abuse Prevention," *Addictive Behaviors*, vol. 9, 1984; R. Weissberg and M.Z. Caplan, "Promoting Social Competence and Preventing Anti-Social Behavior in Young Adolescents," University of Illinois, Department of Psychology, 1994, [see Gottfredson, 1997, pp. 5-29 to 5-31; 5-36-5-38].

⁴⁰J.E. Lochman, et al, "Treatment and Generalization Effects of Cognitive-Behavioral and Goal-Setting Interventions with Aggressive Boys," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, vol. 52, 1984, pp. 915-916; B.H. Bry, "Reducing the Incidence of Adolescent Problems through Preventative Intervention: One- and Five-Year Follow-Up," *American Journal of Community Psychology*, vol. 10, 1982; M. Lipset, "Juvenile Delinquency Treatment: A Meta-Analytic Inquiry into the Variability of Effects," in T. Cook et al., eds., *Meta-Analysis for Explanation: A Casebook*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1992. [see Gottfredson, 1997, pp. 5-43 to 5-46].

⁴¹D. Gottfredson, 1986; G. Gottfredson, "Peer Group Interventions to Reduce the Risk of Delinquent Behavior: A Selective Review and a New Evaluation. *Criminology*, vol. 25, 1987, pp. 671-714; Lipset, 1992) [see Gottfredson, 1997, pp. 5-46 to 5-48].

2. Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE), a curriculum taught by uniformed police officers primarily to 5th and 6th graders in 17 or more lessons, has virtually no effect on drug abuse.⁴² Available evaluations are limited to the original DARE curriculum, which was modified slightly in 1993 and again in 1998, and now extends from K-12 in Los Angeles.

3. Instructional programs focusing on information dissemination, fear arousal, moral appeal, self-esteem, and affective education generally fail to reduce substance abuse.⁴³

4. Alternative activities and school-based leisure time enrichment programs, including supervised homework, self-esteem exercises, community service and field trips, fail to reduce delinquency risk factors or drug abuse.⁴⁴

What's Promising. The following programs have only one level 3 or higher study showing that they work, but there are no studies of that strength showing that they do not work:

⁴²C. Ringwalt, J. Green, S. Ennett, R. Iachan, R.R. Clayton, & C.G. Leukefeld. "Past and Future Directions of the D.A.R.E. Program: An Evaluation Review: Draft Final Report (award # 91-DD-CX-K053)". Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice, 1994; D.P. Rosenbaum, R.L. Flewelling, S.L. Bailey, C.L. Ringwalt, and D.L. Wilkinson. "Cops in the Classroom: A Longitudinal Evaluation of Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE)," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, vol. 31, 1994: pp. 3-31; R.R. Clayton, A.M. Cattarello, and B.M. Johnstone. "The Effectiveness of Drug Abuse Resistance Education (Project DARE): Five-Year Follow-up Results," *Preventative Medicine*. vol. 25, 1996, pp. 307-318. [see Gottfredson, 1997, pp. 5-28, 29; 5-32 to 5-36].

⁴³G. Botvin. "Substance Abuse Prevention: Theory, Practice, and Effectiveness," In M. Tonry and J.Q. Wilson (eds.), *Drugs and Crime. Crime and Justice*, vol. 13, 1990. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [see Gottfredson, 1997, p. 5-29].

⁴⁴Botvin, 1990; W.B. Hansen. "School-Based Substance Abuse Prevention: A Review of the State of the Art Curriculum 1980-1990," *Health Education Research*, vol. 7, 1992, pp. 403-430; Ross, J.G., P.J. Saabedra, G.H. Shur, F. Winters, & R.D. Felner. "The Effectiveness of an After-School Program for Primary Grade Latchkey Students on Precursors of Substance Abuse," *Journal of Community Psychology, OSAP Special Issue*, 1992, pp. 22-38; Stoil, M., G. Hill, & P.J. Brounstein. "The Seven Core Strategies for ATOD Prevention: Findings of the National Structure Evaluation of What is Working Well Where." A Paper Presented at the 12th Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association, Washington, D.C.1994; Cronin, J. "An Evaluation of a School-Based Community Service Program: The Effects of Magic Me." Technical Report Available from Gottfredson Associates, Inc., Ellicott City, Md.1996 [see Gottfredson, 1997, pp. 5-48, 5-50 to 5-53].

1. "Schools within schools" programs (such as Student Training through Urban Strategies, or STATUS) that group students into smaller units for more supportive interaction or flexibility in instruction have reduced drug abuse and delinquency.⁴⁵

2. Training or coaching in "thinking" skills for high-risk youth, using behavior-modification techniques or rewards and punishments, may reduce delinquency and are known to reduce substance abuse.⁴⁶

Crafting Policy from Evidence

Three decades ago, under the old federalism, a highly trained civil servant in Washington might have taken this list and offered funding to schools that could propose plausible plans for replicating one or more of the programs that work. Each proposal would have been carefully reviewed, and regional federal officials might even have visited each site. If the program was not implemented as planned, there might have been some attempt to cut off the funds, but an appeal to a Congress member might have stopped that attempt quickly.

Under the new federalism, the law essentially limits civil servants in Washington to writing a check and enclosing it with a manual of recommended programs. The premise is that no one in Washington is close enough to local conditions to decide what kinds of programs are most appropriate for any given locale. While that may well be true, it is not clear that proximity alone leads to the right answer. Local officials may have more information, but they may also be more susceptible to the enthusiasm of advocates selling what has proven to be snake oil.

Antinomian critics of the list of what works and what doesn't will cite the uncertainty about generalizability of the results. So do the evaluators. Gilbert Botvin, the inventor of LST—the most effective (but by no means the most widely used) drug prevention curriculum—examined

⁴⁵D. Gottfredson. "Changing School Structures to Benefit High-Risk Youths." In P. E. Leone (Ed.) *Understanding Troubled and Troubling Youth*. Newbury Park, Cal.: Sage Publications, 1990.

⁴⁶B. H. Bry. "Reducing the Incidence of Adolescent Problems Through Preventive Intervention: One- and Five-Year Follow-up." *American Journal of Community Psychology*, vol. 10, 1982, pp. 265-276.

the variability in the quality of implementation after teacher training. He found that, among schools, the percentage of curricular materials covered in the classroom varied from 27 percent to 97 percent, with an average of 68 percent. Only 75 percent of the students were taught at least 60% of the required content. Most important, the level of implementation directly affected results. When less than 60 percent of the program elements are taught, the program fails to prevent drug abuse.⁴⁷

It is just this "flexibility" of committed teachers that the antinomians wish to preserve. Lisbeth Schorr, for example, objects to a McDonald's Restaurant kind of formula for ensuring consistency across programs—largely on the empirically testable grounds that it cannot be delivered, but also on the grounds that a theory-based flexibility will work better. Botvin's evidence does not support the latter claim, but it may support the former. It is not clear that we have the means to insure proper implementation of the programs that work, even if we could limit funding to only such proven programs.

Lacking the means to ensure fidelity does not mean that we cannot provide them. Just as research can show what works to prevent crime and what doesn't, it can also demonstrate what works in program implementation. Here again, we may confuse the limits of the scientific method with the current limits in funding. With adequate investment in the research and development effort to learn how to implement effective programs, we may well be able to foster evidence-based teaching, and evidence-based school leadership, in ways that reduce violence and drug abuse.

Had we spent far less than \$6 billion on such an effort over the past 12 years, we might have developed by now an effective means of encouraging grass-roots adoption of effective practices. Even one percent of that amount—\$60 million—could have produced a substantial knowledge base. Instead, we gave \$6 billion to local officials to spend any way they wanted. The results are not encouraging.

⁴⁷Botvin, 1990; D. Gottfredson, Testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, May 6, 1999.

2. SYMBOLIC PORK: THE RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program is based on two key principles: One is that every state should get an equal share of money per student, regardless of need. The other is that there should be minimal interference from Washington. Ironically, federal officials are the first to be blamed for any local program failures. A *Los Angeles Times* exposé in 1998 documented such failures extensively. Yet in the 1999 State of the Union Address, the President received bipartisan applause when he called for continuing the program.

THE SHAPE OF THE LEGISLATION.

The Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, first passed in 1986, was most recently reauthorized as the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act in 1994, under Title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.⁴⁸ The law divides the available funds on the basis of the number of students in each state. It gives 20 percent of each state's funds to the governors to award as grants. The remaining 80 percent is allocated to school districts on the basis of enrollment (70 percent) and need (30 percent).

The result of this formula is that the money is spread very thinly across the 14,881 school districts in the country, most of which participate in the program. Six out of every ten school districts receive \$10,000 or less each year. Small districts may receive only \$200 or \$300, which does not even cover paperwork processing time. In 1977, the Greenpoint Elementary School District in Humboldt County, California, received \$53 for its 20 students.⁴⁹

Large school districts, in contrast, receive enough money to cover substantial administrative costs. The Los Angeles Unified School District received \$8 million from the program in 1997 for its 660,000 students. It spent \$2.2 million—28 percent—of the funds on

⁴⁸ Sections 4111-4116, 20 U.S.C. 7111-7116.

⁴⁹ Ralph Frammolino, "Failing Grade for Safe Schools Plan." *Los Angeles Times*, September 6, 1998, p. 1.

administration, including a \$1,000 bonus to teachers who serve as program coordinators at each school.

School districts are also authorized to spend up to 20 percent of their funds for security measures, such as metal detectors or security guards. Schools in communities as safe as State College, Pennsylvania, have followed this suggestion in recent years, assigning police or guards to patrol the schools. So did Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, although it was completely ineffective in preventing a mass murder. It is not clear what crime prevention effects, if any, these security measures achieve, since they are largely untested. What is clear is that many low-risk schools spend program dollars on security measures without any demonstrated need.

ADMINISTRATIVE RULEMAKING

In response to the March 1997 University of Maryland report on preventing crime, the U.S. Department of Education proposed revised guidelines in July 1997 to make the program more evidence-based. The proposed rules tried to limit the funding to activities for which there was some research showing effectiveness. The guidelines originally proposed that each state or school district "design and implement its programs for youth based on research or evaluation that provides evidence that the programs used prevent or reduce drug use, violence, or disruptive behavior among youth."⁵⁰ Even this was too tough a standard to impose.

In June 1998, the Department of Education summarized the comments received on the proposed principles and published its final "non-regulatory guidance for implementing SDFSCA principles of effectiveness." The comments indicate a strong grass-roots reaction against the attempt to invoke evidence-based government. The final rules show the compromises the Department made to preserve the symbolism of evidence without much reality:⁵¹

Comments: Several commentators noted the lack of research-based programs in drug and violence prevention that meet local

⁵⁰ *Federal Register*, July 16, 1997 (62 FR 38072).

⁵¹ *Federal Register* 63 No. 104, p. 29902, June 1, 1998.

needs. One of those commentators stated that the high standard imposed by the SDFS Principles of Effectiveness would create a "cartel" or monopoly since very few programs can meet the standard established.

Discussion: While a significant body of research about effective programs that prevent youth drug use and violence exists, even more needs to be done to identify a broader group of programs and practices that respond to varied needs.

Changes: Based on these concerns, the Secretary has modified the language accompanying this principle. These modifications broaden the scope of the term "research-based" approach to include programs that show promise of being effective in preventing or reducing drug use or violence.

Comment: One commentator expressed concern that implementation of the SDFS Principles of Effectiveness may force rural LEAs to replace "old favorite" programs that they feel have been working for them with prevention programs that have been proven to work in other socioeconomic areas—such as high-population LEAs—but may not be appropriate to their needs.

Discussion: The Department plans to provide technical assistance to help LEAs obtain information about effective, research-based programs appropriate for an LEA's demographics. The purpose of the SDFS Principles of Effectiveness is to ensure that funds available to grantees under the SDFSCA are used in the most effective way. This allows LEAs to continue "old favorite" programs if they are effective or show promise of effectiveness."

The language of "promise" in the revised guidance raises the basic question of how "research-based programs" are defined. "Promise" is not defined the same way as in the Maryland report, with at least one level 3 impact evaluation showing a positive result. In fact, there is no definition of "Research-based" programs to be found anywhere in either the Principles of Effectiveness (which have the force of administrative rules) or the accompanying "Nonregulatory Guidance." In the final published version supplementing the Federal Register announcement, one section discussed (but did not define) the meaning of programs that show promise of being effective:

Recipients that choose this approach should carefully examine the program they plan to implement to determine if it holds promise of success. Does it share common components or elements with programs that have been demonstrated to be successful? Is the program clearly based on accepted

research? Is there preliminary data or other information that suggest that the program shows promise of effectiveness? If recipients decide to implement a promising program, at the end of no more than two years of implementation they must be prepared to demonstrate to the entity providing their grant that the program has been effective in preventing or reducing drug use, violence, or disruptive behavior, or in modifying behaviors or attitudes demonstrated to be precursors of drug use or violence.

This section is followed by a question-and-answer section on how to evaluate programs, which provides this further detail:

Q53. What does "evaluate" mean?

A53. Evaluation is the systematic collection and analysis of data needed to make decisions. Periodically, recipients will need to examine the programs being implemented to determine if they are meeting established measurable goals and objectives. The nature and extent of such evaluation activities will vary, and should be selected after considering the methods that are appropriate and feasible to measure success of a particular intervention. . . .

Q55. Must evaluation efforts include a control group?

A55. No, recipients are not required to establish a control group.

Thus a close reading of these rules suggests that "research-based" or "promising" can mean anything that recipients say it means. Expressed in terms of the Maryland scale, evaluations need not be any higher than level 1 or 2. Since there is no clear requirement for an outcome measure, some recipients might even interpret this language to allow goals to be defined in terms of outputs alone—the number of students attending DARE classes, for example. By failing to define the meaning of "research-based," the Department continued the basic policy of letting recipients spend the money without regard to results. But it is not clear that Congress or the White House would have allowed the Department to push much further if the grass-roots protests had become very loud.

In the final language of the explanatory comments accompanying the principle of research-based programs, the Department tried to please both the antinomians and the mainstream evaluators simultaneously:

While the Secretary recognizes the importance of flexibility in addressing State and local needs, the Secretary believes that the implementation of research-based programs will significantly enhance the effectiveness of programs supported with SDFSCA funds. In selecting effective programs most responsive to their needs, grantees are encouraged to review the breadth of available research and evaluation literature, and to replicate these programs in a manner consistent with their original design.

HOW THE MONEY HAS BEEN SPENT

Given the legislation and rules, the resulting expenditures were predictable. *Los Angeles Times* reporter Ralph Frammolino spent months learning what the Department of Education has no system for knowing: how the local education-authority recipients spent the money. While neither a systematic audit nor a social scientist's coding of different categories of spending, Frammolino's research provides a level of detail that supports his basic conclusion: "Left to thrash about for any strategy that works, local officials scatter federal money in all directions and on unrelated expenses."⁵²

Frammolino found many examples of schools spending money on entertainment that was, in theory, supposed to inspire students to stay drug free. The theoretical basis of that claim is far from clear in his examples:

- Several months before the March 1998 murders in Jonesboro, Arkansas, the school used program funds to hire a magician.
- One Washington-based magician makes 200 performances with a drug awareness theme annually, some 25 percent of which are paid for with program funds. The \$500 show lasts 45 minutes, during which "we might cut a girl in half and talk about drugs damaging a body."
- The 1997 Miss Louisiana gives anti-drug talks paid for by program funds, in which she sings the love theme from "Titanic" and Elvis Presley's "If I can Dream."
- A school district outside Sacramento paid \$400 for a speaker who described the life of Dylan Thomas and his death from alcohol.

⁵²Ralph Frammolino, "Failing Grade for Safe Schools Plan."

Other Program funds are spent on the "alternative activities" that Denise Gottfredson's review found ineffective. In Los Angeles, more than \$15,000 was spent on tickets to Dodgers games, and \$850 was spent for Disneyland passes. In Eureka, Utah, officials spent \$1,000 on fishing equipment for field trips in which students go fishing with a health teacher. The teacher said he thought students might learn to prefer fishing to drinking and trying drugs. In Virginia Beach, Virginia, program funds paid for lifeguards and dunking booths for drug-free graduation activities.

Many dollars are spent on classroom instruction aids, although the connection to violence and drug prevention is unclear. Hammond, Louisiana, police spent \$6,500 of program funds to buy a remote-controlled, three-foot replica of a police car. In Michigan, a state audit found \$1.5 million spent on full models of the human torso, \$81,000 for large sets of plastic teeth and toothbrushes, and \$18,500 for recordings of the "Hokey Pokey." These aids were used to teach tooth brushing, sex education, and self-esteem.

Enormous sums are spent on publications. Over half of the \$8 million in Los Angeles went to buy books; \$3.3 million was spent on character education books published by a small publisher specializing in books reimbursed by the program. The books provide 2nd to 5th graders with "Lessons in Character." They are part of a program in which "pillars of character: respect, responsibility, fairness and trustworthiness" are supposed to be taught for a minimum of 24 40-minute sessions spread across the school year. Another \$900,000 was paid for substitutes to replace 2,354 teachers who spent a day attending seminars on how to inculcate character in elementary schools or how to lead discussion groups with older "at-risk" students. Frammolino reports that "student assistance groups" use about half the national budget for the program. In 141 Los Angeles schools, 2,450 groups of high-risk students are led by teachers given five days of training and a script. The students are pulled out of one class period per month to discuss their personal problems. They are not exposed to LST, the research-based curriculum that San Diego school officials obtained \$1 million in

federal funds to implement. San Diego is one of the few large districts known to have done so.

ESTIMATING RETURN ON INVESTMENT

For the estimated half of all program funds spent on counseling,⁵³ the return on investment is reliably estimated to be zero. Mark Lipsey's 1992 meta-analysis of juvenile delinquency interventions found counseling near the bottom in effectiveness, with an average effect size of -0.01. Gary Gottfredson's 1987 level 3 evaluation of peer counseling groups similar to the Student Assistance Program groups in Los Angeles found that the groups increased delinquency slightly, rather than reducing it.⁵⁴

The portion of program funds spent on alternative leisure activities is also producing zero return for prevention. The evidence shows either no effects from such programs or increases in delinquency from mixing high-risk and low-risk youth in the absence of strong pro-social norms. These "old favorites" may appear effective to the teachers who lead them, but the teachers can hardly tell what effect the programs have on delinquency when they are not around. One program of such activities led by a street gang social worker actually kept offending rates high until the program's funding ran out. When the activities ended, the gang's cohesion declined, and so did its members' offense rates.⁵⁵

The return from hiring magicians, singers, speakers, and other inspirational performers is unknown. It seems reasonable to dismiss these programs as a waste of money, if only because there is no plausible theory or indirect evidence to suggest that these activities should prevent violence or drug abuse.

Estimating the return on investment in character education is a harder task. James Q. Wilson wrote after the Littleton school murders that American schools were designed primarily for character education, a mission they have lost in recent years. He suggested that if schools

⁵³GAO, 1993, as cited in Hansen and O'Malley, 1996.

⁵⁴D. Gottfredson, in *Preventing crime*, 1997, pp. 5-46 to 47.

⁵⁵Malcolm Klein, *Street Gangs and Street Gang Workers*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

really got serious about this task, they might be able to foster a climate less conducive to violence. It is not clear, however, whether mere books and lectures are enough to make character education a central mission of a school. The research on whole-school organizational strategies may indicate the extent of the changes required. Nonetheless, both the character curricula and Wilson's larger hypothesis remain unevaluated. Both could be fruitful topics for increased research on school-based prevention.

The most profitable investment in the program's portfolio may be the LST curriculum. To the extent that the curriculum is fully taught, it could be achieving up to 66 percent reductions in substance abuse.⁵⁶ Yet the amount of program funding allocated to this program is unknown. Far more money appears to be spent on the police-taught DARE program, which has not shown meaningful prevention effects in any of its evaluations to date. Yet DARE's effective grass-roots organizing and lobbying has far more power to obtain funding than does the strong evidence produced by the LST evaluations.

In summary, it is difficult to demonstrate much, if any, clear prevention benefit from the half-billion dollars or more per year of federal funding for the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program. Even in the face of Congressional concern, the program remains alive because of its political benefit. As Rep. George Miller (D-Martinez) told Frammolino, "Every elected official wants these programs in their district. . . . Once you succumb to that pressure, you're just dealing with a political program. You're not dealing with drug prevention or violence prevention." Or as Rep. Pete Hoekstra observed, "Most of the numbers on Safe and Drug-Free Schools will tell you that the federal program has failed miserably."

⁵⁶ Frammolino, 1998.

3. MARRYING GRASS ROOTS WITH EVIDENCE

Can this program be saved? Can it do something useful, rather than squandering tax dollars indefinitely? Answering these questions requires a more general perspective on the new federalism and evidence-based accountability. It also requires acknowledging the limitations of divided government, with different parties in control of the Executive and Legislative branches. As long as government is divided, Congress has no incentive to grant strong powers to the Executive branch to improve results. Success by the administration may be good for the country, but it is bad for party politics. This was true when the program started in 1986 with a Democratic Congress during a Republican presidency, and remains true in 1999 with a Republican Congress and a Democratic presidency.

Many observers—former OMB staffers, one current member of President George W. Bush's Cabinet, educational policy experts—have told me that the program should simply be eliminated. That response is not useful, given the very strong political forces keeping the program alive. In the wake of the 1999 school murders, the Program is less likely than ever to be eliminated, no matter how much evidence may support that action. The only useful question is how the program might be modified, within the political constraints that Congress and the President perceive, to make schools even safer and more drug free than they already are.

There are at least four possible approaches to modifying the program within its political constraints. One is the FDA model of federally approved programs. A second is the agricultural extension-agent model for applying national knowledge. A third is the GPRA model for local accounting indicators. But only the fourth alternative, evidence-based government, seems likely to combine knowledge and democracy and achieve good results.

Federal Certification: The FDA Model

One alternative is to pass more-detailed legislation on programs eligible for federal funds. Congress may not want the administration deciding what programs are eligible, which could work to the administration's own political advantage. (An era of same-party control of the White House and the Congress, however, may produce different dynamics from those of the past half-century) Congress could commission the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) or the National Research Council (NRC) to review the literature annually and develop a list of evidence-based programs that the Department of Education would certify as eligible for program funding. That review could develop detailed blueprints for the elements of the programs reviewed, so that funding would not be based on names alone. This would build on the precedent of the FDA certifying drugs found to be safe and effective for public distribution. It would substitute the NAS review of research for the FDA review, while the underlying evaluations research could be funded by Congressional appropriations for peer-reviewed studies under grants from the Department of Education or the National Institute of Justice. The NAS could also develop a list of methods found to be ineffective, and these could be barred from federal funding. Room for new innovations could be created by reserving 20 percent of the funding for previously untested programs, along with requirements that the funded innovations be rigorously evaluated (level 3 or higher) by an independent research organization or university.

Limitations. The major problem with this approach is that the available research lacks legitimacy across a wide spectrum of grass-roots leadership. The most common example of this problem is the statement that "DARE may not work in the places where it was studied, but we know it is working in our local schools." Even if one accepts all the available research that supports lists of effective and ineffective programs, those lists are very short. Much of what the program spends money on has never been evaluated, at least not in the precise form that each locality employs. The lack of knowledge about locally popular programs further reduces the legitimacy of the FDA approach at the grass roots level.

The Agricultural Extension-Agent Model

A more democratic approach would simply put the available knowledge into the hands of grass-roots leaders, using the agricultural extension-agent model. Since 1919, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has shared with the states the cost of hiring university employees to provide evidence-based farming advice directly to farmers. Congress does not have to review any literature to do this. It merely pays for an ongoing flow of data between universities and farms. This partnership has helped make America the breadbasket of the world. The subject matter of farming may not be as contentious as that of running schools, but controversy may not be the key variable. In agriculture and education alike, the key to success may be a close personal relationship between a university extension agent and a local decisionmaker.

If school districts could rely on educational extension agents to provide them with free technical assistance on how to spend their Program funds, the schools might move voluntarily toward adopting the same list of proven programs that an FDA model might develop. The problem with Washington bureaucrats, or even researchers in other cities, is that they are faceless and impersonal. The virtue of extension agents giving advice is that they become well-known personalities, long-term colleagues in the same community. Even medical doctors ignore research evidence when it comes to them in the form of publications, and they resent its bureaucratic imposition in the form of managed-care reimbursement rules. As a RAND study discovered, doctors usually do not change their practices⁵⁷ even when they become aware of NIH consensus recommendations based on best research and clinical experience.

⁵⁷ Jacqueline Kosecoff, et al, "Effect of the National Institutes of Health Consensus Development Program on Physician Practice." *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Vol. 258, NO. 19(20 November) 1987: 2708-2713, as cited in Michael L. Millenson, *Demanding Medical Excellence*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998: 128; see also David A. Davis, et al, "Changing Physician Performance: A Systematic Review of the Effect of Continuing Medical Education Strategies" *Journal of the American Medical Vol.* 274, NO. 9 (Septembr 6) 1995: 700-705; Bruce Slater, " "Systematic Practice-Based Interventions are Better than Conferences for Improving Professional Practice," *Evidence-Based Medicine* 2, no. 6 (January-February) 1996: 60-61).

Limitations. Commentaries on the extension agent model have suggested that there is no guarantee that the agents would stick to the evidence. Some commentators indict schools of education as being often indifferent to research evidence and prone to pushing the latest fads. Social integration of extension agents with the grass-roots leadership could put pressure on the agents to find research that "justifies" the decisions local leaders make, rather than objectively informing those decisions. And without a basis for increasing the availability of strong evaluation research, these agents of applied research would have too little research to apply.

The GPRA Model

The third alternative is to require that each of the 109,000 schools receiving federal funds account for the results of those funds, using the GPRA standards. This model assumes that localities cannot do their own controlled field tests of prevention programs, but they can at least document trends in crime and drug abuse associated with those programs over time. Given the secret nature of much crime and delinquency, this would require schools to administer annual student self-report surveys of victimization, offending, and drug abuse. Such instruments are readily available and would require only local competence in their administration and interpretation. Properly employed, these surveys could identify schools that showed greater or lesser success over time in preventing drug abuse and violence, just as a CPA statement shows how profit levels change over time in publicly held corporations.

Limitations. The main limitation of this model is resources. As a recent RAND study suggests, local school leaders are unable to add such evaluations to their job descriptions.⁵⁸ They already have far too many duties to add survey research to the list. Their interpretation of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program is that it asks them

⁵⁸ Melissa A. Bradley, Michael Timpane, and Peter Reuter, "Focus Groups: Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program Conference Draft," RAND Corporation Aspen Institute Wye River Conference on Prevention of Drug Abuse and Violence Among Schoolchildren, July 21-23, 1999.

to provide evaluations without paying for the work.⁵⁹ This problem is summarized elsewhere as "there's no such thing as free evidence."⁶⁰ Even more important, however, is the scientific limitation of the GPRA local accounting model. Without explicit field tests employing control groups, the causal link between programs and trends in "outcomes" will remain tenuous. And even with a local evaluation staff assigned to such accounting tasks on a full-time basis, the common failure to adjust for student background characteristics can make trend analysis a very poor indicator of how successful schools are with the cards they are dealt.

The importance of controlling for student background characteristics cannot be overestimated. There is a strong link between the social capital of the community and the overall success of education.⁶¹ To account for the value that schools add to their students beyond what students acquire at home, all performance measures should control for the expected rates of student failure or success. This is as true of drug abuse as it is of SAT scores. Parental educational levels, parental employment rates and income, prevalence of two-parent homes, and other factors can be measured in student surveys. However, proper statistical controls for these background factors require competent data analysts in each state and large school district, people whose full-time job is the collection and interpretation of valid local accounting data. Merely requiring schools to produce GPRA-style trend data comes nowhere near meeting these needs.

Evidence-Based Democracy

The fourth, and arguably best, approach to reforming the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program is to combine national knowledge, risk-adjusted local GPRA accounting, and grass-roots democracy. This approach starts with a participatory planning process

⁵⁹ Melissa A. Bradley, Michael Timpane, and Peter Reuter, "Focus Groups: Safe and Drug Free Schools Program Conference Draft." RAND Corporation Aspen Institute Wye River Conference on Prevention of Drug Abuse and Violence Among School Children, July 21-23, 1999.

⁶⁰ Lawrence W. Sherman, "Ten Principles of Evidence-Based Government." Unpublished ms., Fels Center of Government, University of Pennsylvania, 1999.

⁶¹ Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*. N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 2000.

of using data to hold programs accountable, one that includes schoolteachers, administrators, parents, school board members, students, and local taxpayers. Such a group can be called a planning committee, an oversight group, or a results task force. It could be operated at the margins of a school system, or it could be integrated into the ongoing supervision of the schools. It could meet in private, or it could hold annual public sessions in which each school principal is asked to account for the data assembled by the school district's own performance data analyst. Such high-visibility sessions could be as successful as the New York City Police "Compstat"⁶² process or hospital "grand rounds" in focusing the organization on its outcomes, whether the outcomes measure crime and drug abuse or SAT scores.⁶³

No matter how each local education authority chooses to use the data, the key element of this approach is putting the right kind of data in their hands. These data should include the latest, most complete results of national research, as well as highly refined local trend data. Such data should look not only at measures of crime and drug abuse, but also at measures of program implementation and fidelity. School climate measures from annual surveys of students and teachers would be a critical component of the local accounting data, given the strong relationship in the literature between school organizational climate and all school-specific results. It is the measurement of educational practices that allows local conclusions to be drawn about the cause-and-effect outcomes of different programs and practices. It is the measurement of school-specific—and possibly even teacher-specific or class-specific—results net of the student background characteristics that helps identify true success or failure. And it is exactly this process that has proven successful in hospitals for diagnosing high failure rates and improving results.⁶⁴

The use of these data would therefore constitute an iterative process of the kind proposed by W. Edwards Deming. Figure 1 shows how

⁶²James Lardner and Thomas Repetto, *NYPD: A City and Its Police*. N.Y.: Henry Holt, 2000: 323-326).

⁶³Sherman, "Evidence-Based Policing."

⁶⁴Millenson, *Demanding Medical Excellence*.

the process would draw on both national and local evidence on the relationship between practices and outcomes. The model is as applicable to drug-abuse rates as it is to SAT scores. Its success depends largely on the quality of the data and the quality of the leadership using the data to improve performance.

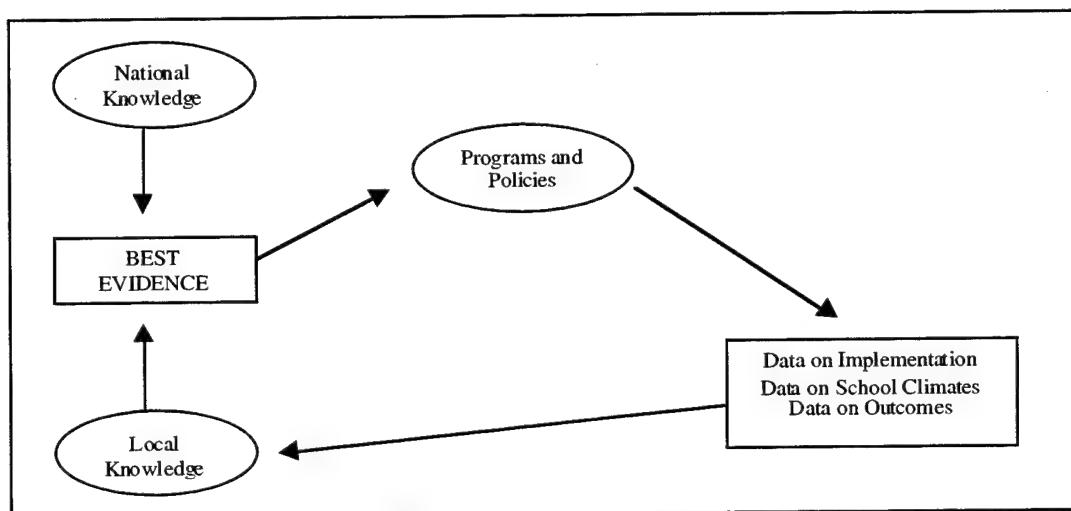


Figure 1

Limitations. The major limitation of this approach is cost. The approach may not be feasible in the majority of school districts that are too small to support a performance data analyst, although state agencies could provide local schools with a time-shared performance-analysis service. Even in the larger districts, the approach requires new data collection and new knowledge rarely found in-house. It is striking that the Department of Education would put into print the suggestion that "grantees are encouraged to review the breadth of available research and evaluation literature, and to replicate these programs in a manner consistent with their original design." It is unclear how many LEAs have staff with the time and the training needed to do all that properly. But it is clear that PhD-level "performance accountants" could devote their entire careers to reviewing and

explaining the results of ongoing school-based prevention and performance program evaluations. School-based prevention research is a highly specialized field that even few university professors are equipped to discuss. Yet only this kind of infrastructure can provide the requisite level of expertise in comprehending, communicating, and applying the research.

If Congress wants to see local prevention programs based on sound knowledge, perhaps the best way to achieve that goal is to pay for it. Changing the program to earmark an additional 10 percent of funds for performance-data accounting would put some \$50 million into this function nationwide. But without such an appropriation, this approach is not likely to be implemented.

IMPLICATIONS FOR REINVENTING GOVERNMENT AND GPRA

As long as the Department of Education is prohibited by law from "exercising any direction, supervision, or control over the curriculum or program of instruction of any school or school system,"⁶⁵ it makes little sense to hold the Department accountable for results. That is one example of the major flaw in GPRA—and in federal accountability in general in an era of grass-roots control. But the Department could be empowered to measure results across LEAs and to use those measures for further pressure to adopt evidence-based government. That measurement could also be part of an amended Safe and Drug-Free Schools program. The university extension service associated with each school district could be charged with collecting standardized data from local police or other sources, all of which would be sent to Washington for analysis.

The method of outcome assessment is an important issue for making GPRA work. Perhaps the best way to ensure that performance measures are adjusted for student background characteristics is to require each state to produce a ranking of schools or school systems on standardized, background-controlled results. This ranking could allow schools in high-poverty areas to show more value-added results than schools in

⁶⁵U.S. Department of Education, Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act, State Grants for Drug and Violence Prevention Program, Nonregulatory Guidance for Implementing SDFSCA Principles of Effectiveness, May, 1998.

wealthy suburban areas. Aggregating such measures by state and nation could even allow the federal Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Community program to produce its own meaningful GPRA indicators for the nation's 14,881 school districts. The annual standing of each district (probably within the categories of urban, suburban, and rural schools) could become a point of pride in fostering an evidence-based culture of results guiding democracy at the grass roots.

Such rankings could also, of course, become a source of cheating. The more important evidence becomes, the more likely it is to be subverted. Thus it is no surprise that a Texas school official was recently indicted for falsifying school test scores. That is one more reason to have a performance analyst symbolically clothed in the mantle of accounting, rather than science. "Studies" as such can always be discounted as irrelevant, but profit-and-loss statements carry overtones of serious business.

4. CONCLUSION

There may be other ways to make the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program less wasteful and more useful. No matter how it is done, the fundamental challenge remains the same: marrying grass-roots federalism to a culture of evidence-based government. This marriage may be one of the few ways to overcome symbolic pork. It provides no solution to the mismatching of resources and risk, but it does begin to do what President Clinton proposed for federal education funding in his 1999 State of the Union Message: to "change the way we invest that money, to support what works and to stop supporting what doesn't."⁶⁶

⁶⁶ *New York Times*, January 20, 1999, p. A22, Washington edition.

**OBSTACLES TO SAFE AND DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS:
TRAPPED KIDS, COMPETING CURRICULA, AND SCARCE GUARDIANS**

Jackson Toby

1. WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE?

Underlying this paper is my assumption that the most serious obstacle to an effective safe and drug-free schools program is not money or even research but adequate conceptualization of the causes of school violence and of high levels of illegal substance use among public secondary school students. What I will do is to set forth my own conceptualization of these problems, which then leads to suggested remedies. I understand that research is needed both to test my theoretical assumptions and the usefulness of my suggested remedies. Specifically, I believe that two factors underlie school violence, both everyday school violence and the catastrophic violence such as that which recently erupted in Littleton, Colorado: trapped students and a paucity of adult guardians. I believe that a third factor is needed to explain widespread substance use and abuse by secondary school students: the existence of multiple curricula in American secondary schools from which students learn, including the official curriculum but not limited to it.

Trapped students. In all the commentary on the murders at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, an obvious question has gone unraised: Why, if Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold were miserable at school, didn't they simply drop out and get jobs? Why did they feel trapped? The answer is apparently that the social stigma of dropping out of high school is so great in middle-class suburbs that it is unthinkable.

Because Americans regard dropping out as a terrible mistake -- for good reason in an information-oriented society -- all states have compulsory-attendance laws forbidding students from dropping out until they turn 16 and sometimes until they turn 18 or even older. States have also imposed penalties on dropouts and their families, including

reduced welfare benefits. West Virginia began in 1988 to revoke the driver's licenses of minors who drop out of school, and other states followed suit, even though research demonstrated that this approach had a negligible effect on the dropout rate in West Virginia (Toby and Armor, 1992). Most important of all, suburban culture defines dropping out as illegitimate, thereby trapping youngsters like Harris and Klebold even though they were old enough to leave.

A good case can be made for coercing kids to attend high school in a modern society. However, the downside is that some kids are miserable in school, usually for academic reasons, but sometimes, as in Columbine High School, for social and/or personal reasons. Kids in inner-city high schools are more likely than kids in middle-class suburbs to find school unpleasant because they are often not engaged academically, sometimes when schoolwork does not enjoy sufficient parental or peer group support, sometimes due to individual circumstances that interfere with acquiring academic skills. Whatever the reason, if students fail to learn what the school tries to teach them, they have poor chances to go to college and prepare for a well-paid, interesting job, and they usually know it. They can and do drop out. But they too are under pressure to remain enrolled whether they find school meaningful or not: formal pressure from compulsory attendance laws and informal dropout-prevention arguments from teachers, parents, and the larger society.

Thus, inner-city and suburban schools both contain trapped kids. In inner-city high schools the main consequence of containing a substantial population of involuntary students who lack a stake in behavioral conformity (Toby, 1957) is to undermine the educational process. Because so many students do not perceive school as contributing to their futures, even those who do not drop out have little incentive to be respectful to their teachers or to try to please them. There are further consequences. They cope with being compelled to spend a good part of their time in an environment they dislike by various coping mechanisms. Some truant. Some clown around for the amusement of their friends and themselves. Some come to school drunk or high on illegal drugs. Some wander the halls looking for friends to speak with or enemies to fight. Some assault other kids or extort money

or valuables from them, partly for profit but also for kicks. Some simply turn off.

Unlike a prison, where a prisoner has to participate in the program willy-nilly, education in any meaningful sense depends on a cooperative relationship between teacher and student, not on the occasional presence of an enrolled student in a classroom. Professors Lawrence Steinberg of Temple University, Bradford Brown of the University of Wisconsin, and Sandford Dornbusch of Stanford University conducted a massive study of 12,000 students in nine high schools in Wisconsin and Northern California from 1987 to 1990. They concluded that about 40% of the students in these diverse educational settings (middle-class suburban schools, rural schools, and inner-city schools) were "disengaged" from the educational enterprise. Here is how Professor Steinberg put it in his book *Beyond the Classroom*:

Disengaged students . . . do only as much as it takes to avoid getting into trouble. They do not exert much effort in the classroom, are easily distracted during class, and expend little energy on in-school or out-of-school assignments. They have a jaded, often cavalier attitude toward education and its importance to their future success or personal development. When disengaged students are in school, they are clearly just going through the motions. When they are not in school, school is the last thing on their mind (Steinberg, 1996, p. 15).

The national trend toward raising the age of compulsory attendance from 16 to 18 worsens rather than improves high school education and inevitably contributes to discipline problems, including the likelihood of catastrophic violence such as occurred at Columbine High School. A half a dozen years ago the District of Columbia raised the age from 16 to 18, after which its schools went downhill faster (Toby, 1995). Even if such legal requirements could guarantee the physical presence of alienated students in school, they cannot force students to learn. Disengaged students not only threaten the educational process directly by not putting forth effort; they also threaten it indirectly by undermining the morale of teachers.

Weak Adult Guardians. One consequence of having disengaged students still enrolled in high schools but making no effort to learn anything is that teachers get discouraged. It is difficult to teach a lesson that depends on material taught yesterday or last week when appreciable number of students are not in class regularly or fail to pay attention when they do come. Eventually, these circumstances lead some teachers to "burn out" that is, to despair at the seemingly hopeless task of stuffing ideas into the heads of uninterested students (Dworkin, 1987). Burnout is an especially serious problem in inner-city secondary schools where large numbers of teachers retire early, change to another profession, or take jobs in private or parochial schools at a cut in pay. Thus, teacher turnover rates are high in inner-city schools with substantial proportions of internal dropouts ("stayins") who do the educational process no favor (Toby, 1989). New York City, for example, constantly has to hire new teachers (or substitute teachers) to replenish those who abandon their jobs. Of course some public school teachers hold on grimly, taking as many days off as they are entitled to, including not only genuine sick days but "sick" days in which to escape temporarily from demoralization (known to colleagues as "mental health days"). But burned-out teachers lose effectiveness at teaching those in their classes amenable to education; that probably is part of the explanation of the greater satisfaction of students and their parents with charter schools and with private and parochial schools available through voucher programs as compared with public schools (Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore, 1982; Coleman and Hoffer, 1987; Peterson and Hassel, 1998).

Burned-out teachers are also ineffective at preventing student misbehavior. The public thinks of teachers primarily as educators, not as agents of control. Teachers themselves tend to downplay their disciplinary role. Some object to hall or cafeteria duty on the grounds that they are not policemen. If pressed, however, teachers will agree that control of the class is a prerequisite for education.

Whatever the reasons for the reluctance of individual teachers to admonish misbehaving students, partly out of fear for their own safety, partly out of the desire to be popular, this reluctance implies at least

partial abandonment of their disciplinary role. When teachers see student misbehavior and turn away to avoid the necessity of a confrontation, adult control over students diminishes at school, thereby encouraging student misbehavior that might otherwise not otherwise occur. In short, teachers' reluctance to admonish misbehaving students may be partly the cause of the high level of disorder in some schools as well as its effect. The formal controls that have developed in big-city schools are a partial result of the breakdown of *informal* social controls over students, such as the expression of teacher approval or disapproval. Informal controls still work quite well in the smaller schools of smaller communities.

Instead of the natural peacekeepers, teachers, preventing disorder and even violence from breaking out, many school systems resort to security guards, and some schools also have metal detectors to screen for knives and guns. As of several years ago, the District of Columbia school system employed 250 security officers -- along with metal detectors in place in 31 schools. New York City employs 3,200 security officers, as well as metal detectors. Security guards and metal detectors are useful for inner-city schools that need protection against invading predators from surrounding violent neighborhoods and to break up fights that teachers are afraid to tackle. But security programs cannot be the *main* instrument for preventing student misbehavior in public secondary schools because security guards are not ordinarily in classrooms where teachers are alone with their students. Furthermore, there are never enough security guards to maintain order in hallways or gyms or cafeterias or to prevent assaults or robberies by their mere presence. Thus, in January, 1992, while Mayor Dinkins was at Thomas Jefferson High School in Brooklyn, New York, to deliver a speech, accompanied by bodyguards and security guards, two students were fatally shot by an angry fifteen-year-old classmate (Toby, 1992). In short, security guards constitute a second line of defense; they cannot by themselves provide a disciplined environment within which the educational process can proceed effectively.

The Multiplicity of Curricula. Trapped students and a paucity of effective adult guardians help to explain why everyday school violence

is so difficult to control in public secondary schools in the United States. But there is a third factor: the official curriculum sponsored by boards of education, principals, and teachers does not enjoy a curriculum monopoly. This reality was brought home to me some years ago, when interviewing a young inmate in a New Jersey reformatory. I asked Joe about his school experiences. "I liked school," he said. I was surprised. Most of the delinquents I had known hated school and did poorly in their schoolwork. "What did you like about it?" I asked. He told me about sitting in the lunchroom with his gang and having food fights, about "making out" in the halls with his girlfriends, about smoking in the boys' room, about harassing a young, inexperienced teacher so much that she left teaching the following year. "What about your classes?" I asked. "Did you like them?" "Yeah," he replied, "I liked gym." I persisted. Did he like English, math, or anything else in the curriculum? "No," he replied, smiling. "They weren't in my curriculum."

I had naively assumed that the curriculum of a high school is what boards of education, principals, and teachers say it is. But a large public high school is not only an educational opportunity; for students without academic interests it is more like a bazaar. It is a place where a multiplicity of activities are available for students interested in them: Calculus, history, and geography are offered as part of the official curriculum, but so is football, basketball, the student newspaper, chess, romance, sex, extortion from fellow students, and opportunities to make teachers' lives as difficult as possible. Because of the size and heterogeneity of most public high schools, all of the students do not share a common definition of the situation in which they find themselves. For some students, the education that students take advantage of may be quite different from that envisioned in the formal curriculum. Students learn at school lessons that teachers do not teach them.

The term, "extracurricular," presupposes that the clubs and the sports that students pursue supplement rather than displace the paramount academic pursuits of enrolled students. And that is true for most students, especially those who anticipate applying to college and

desire extracurricular interests on their records to show that they are well-rounded persons. But for some students the extracurricular activities take the place of the academic curriculum; the football or basketball player who has no interest in academic subjects is the usual example, but interests in drama or the chorus or the newspaper can also come at the expense of academic achievement. But at least these activities are recognized as legitimate by school authorities. There are, however, other offerings that are by no stretch of the imagination legitimate.

Certainly no school would say that armed robbery is a curriculum offering in its school. But insofar as there is a tradition of predatory extortion by gangs or cliques against weak and fearful schoolmates, some students rehearse the process of preying on their fellows until they become quite skillful at it. In effect, they learn to rob at school. Alcohol and drugs constitute another illegitimate curriculum among the many that compete for student attention. Student interest in drugs and alcohol feeds a counterculture hostile to academic effort, which in turn undermines the authority of teachers and reduces their ability to control student misbehavior.

An obvious question is: why are some youngsters attracted to the alcohol and drug curriculum while others are not? Why aren't all students attracted to it? Since it is an underground curriculum opposed to the official academic curriculum and even to approved extra-curricular activities, alcohol and drugs start with an aroma of forbidden pleasure. Furthermore, alcohol and drugs are symbolically associated with adulthood, and children desire the higher prestige of adult status. As one sociologist put it before drugs became so pervasive in American society, smoking cigarettes, drinking alcoholic beverages, and dating are ways that children can claim adult prerogatives (Stinchcombe, 1968). He would probably agree that "doing" drugs is symbolically adult behavior too. Then there are whatever pleasant sensations the drugs afford. And if these attractions are not enough, the hard drugs like cocaine and heroin can provide self-medication for problems, and problems are universal among adolescents.

In the light of these attractions, why do most students resist them? For several reasons. Most important, students effectively controlled by conventional parents, religious organizations, and teachers accept a negative conception of the drug curriculum. Drug use is dangerous and morally undesirable. Perhaps students experiment furtively with drugs to find out what everyone is talking about, but they do not intend getting permanently involved. Of course, experiments sometimes go awry, and there are cases of essentially conventional kids who get hooked.

A second reason for resisting the attractions of the drug curriculum is that some students, perhaps a quarter of the high school student enrollment, in some high schools more, in some high schools less, perceive themselves and are perceived by others as academic successes. They receive good grades, are enrolled in the college preparatory and advanced placement courses, expect to go to college, and anticipate riding an educational escalator into a bright occupational future. For them, participating in the drug curriculum is incompatible with satisfying life goals; they have too much at stake.

An anonymous survey of 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students in about 40 New Jersey public schools has been conducted at three-year intervals (1980, 1983, 1986, 1989, 1992, 1995, and 1998) in order to assess substance use and abuse among high school students in the State. The following are two of the 143 questions in the 1995 survey:

4. What grades do you usually get?

- A. Mostly A's
- B. Mostly B's
- C. Mostly C's
- D. Mostly D's
- E. Mostly F's

5. Which of the following do you intend to do first after you finish high school?

- A. Attend a two-year college
- B. Attend a four-year college

- C. Obtain technical or job-related training
- D. Take a job without further training
- E. Join the armed forces
- F. Other
- G. Don't know

In Appendix A I include three tables based on the 1995 survey, which is the latest for which data are readily accessible, in order to document the relationship between substance use and educational achievement (Fisher, 1996). Table 1 provides some academic information needed to understand who uses illicit substances and why. About two-thirds of the students surveyed said that they wanted to attend four-year colleges, and 80% of them received mostly grades of B or better. On the other hand, a majority of the students not planning to attend four-year colleges received mostly Cs, Ds, and Fs. Table 2 shows the substance-use patterns of students planning to attend four-year colleges and Table 3 shows the substance-use patterns of students not planning to attend four-year colleges (only a third of the sample) over the past year. Generally, students planning to attend four-year colleges used less of the illegal substances than students not planning to attend four-year colleges except for alcohol, which a majority of all students said they used over the past year. However, the difference was most dramatic for the students who not only planned to attend four-year colleges but who received mostly A grades. They used such substances less than half as often as even the A students not planning to attend four-year colleges.

Finally, a third reason for resisting the attractions of the drug curriculum is fear: fear of suspension or expulsion from school, fear of arrest, fear of parental disapproval -- if parents learn about drug activities. The fourth and fifth reasons may mutually reinforce one another. The school's willingness to invoke severe formal sanctions is in itself a message that drug behavior is illegitimate and reprehensible.

Still, a residual category exists of students not deflected away from alcohol or drugs by these considerations -- or others. They are

not controlled well by parents, teachers, and church leaders; their degree of educational success has not been sufficient to give them a strong stake in conforming behavior; they are involved with peers and responsive to peer influences; they do not fear formal sanctions, perhaps because they do not expect to be caught; and they do not have enough loyalty to the school to be concerned that for many fellow students drug use at school is unthinkable. No one knows for sure what proportion of students are in this residual category of potential customers for the drug curriculum. Probably the proportion varies from school to school and for certain demographic categories. It is probably higher for male students than for female students and for students from highly urbanized than from suburban or rural areas, although some middle-class suburban high schools have major substance-abuse problems.

**2. HOW CAN SCHOOLS BECOME SAFER AND LESS VULNERABLE TO VIOLENCE AND TO
A SUBSTANCE-ABUSE CURRICULUM?**

Given my diagnosis of the causes of unsafe high schools with substantial substance-abuse problems, the remedies that I would suggest are three: (1) give high-school-age youngsters a choice between attending high school and dropping out with an option to return later, (2) devise ways to introduce adult guardians into high schools to buttress the authority of teachers, and (3) crowd out the substance-abuse curriculum by increasing the vitality and attractiveness of the traditional academic curriculum.

LEGITIMATING DROPPING OUT AS AN INTERRUPTION OF EDUCATION

Schools vary in the proportion of students who do homework, attend regularly, are concerned about getting good grades, and work part-time after school to save money for post-secondary education and of students drifting aimlessly in school and looking for new excitement. This issue is particularly acute in some inner-city high schools where the educational process is jeopardized by large numbers of stay-ins. Nearly two decades ago national attention was drawn to Eastside High School in Paterson, New Jersey, where a new principal tried to force out stay-ins in order to make his school safe for education and free of substance abuse. When Joe Clark became principal in 1982, he expelled 300 of the 3,000 students at Eastside in an effort to gain control of the school (Rimer, 1988). At the time few objections were heard about "due process," perhaps because the school was described by journalists as "a cauldron of terror and violence" and desperate measures were thought to be necessary. But in December, 1987, Mr. Clark threw out 60 students, eighteen years and older, who he said had failed too many courses and had not been attending classes or accumulating credits toward graduation in a timely fashion. He described them as "leeches, miscreants, and hoodlums." What Joe Clark did in a heavy-handed way was to get rid of some of the disrupters. He was interested in whether throwing them out was beneficial to the educational process in his school. Other people

were worried about what would happen to those they described as "pushouts" when they hit the streets without an education.

The Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Frank Napier, supported Mr. Clark, but the Board of Education did not. And the law gives the Board, not the principal, the authority to expel students. The controversy over expulsions at Eastside -- and the possibility that the Board would force Mr. Clark to take back the students or fire him for insubordination -- became a national issue. Secretary of Education Bennett spoke out in support of Clark. The student body generally supported him too; individual students said that Clark believed them capable of achieving academically. But Clark was eventually forced out.

One issue that appears to have been involved is whether a tough principal would be allowed to determine the educational climate of his school. Here is how one reader of the *New York Times* put it in a letter to the editor:

Do you really think that the only way a student can drop out of high school is to stop attending ("Student Discipline, Principal Discipline," editorial, Jan. 16)?

Joe Clark, principal of Eastside High School in Paterson, N.J. is in trouble with his Board of Education for expelling failing students, but those students became dropouts a long time ago. Their continued attendance might have been an attempt to avoid the stigma of the label. To continue this deception benefits no one and risks further injury to the nonperforming student and the rest of the student body.

The dropouts need to get on with their lives, and the school needs to get on with the business of schooling. I know: I was a high school dropout. When I had to repeat my last term and found myself doing less and less, I just stopped going. But I had dropped out at least a year earlier.

I got a job (several actually), was drafted and grew up. In the service, I passed my qualifying tests and, after discharge, received my high school equivalency diploma.

Some students will learn despite the school, and some will drop out of the best schools. The important thing is the school's impact on the borderline students, those that will either graduate or drop out. For them, the example of older nonperforming students can be decisive. Had I been exposed to a school such as Joe Clark is attempting to create, I might have graduated (Illiano, 1988).

Mr. Illiano may not be correct that a school requirement for high school students that they either make academic progress or leave is in the long-run interests of most non-performing students. Suppose, for example, that students forced out of high school by principals like Mr. Clark are more likely to become drug abusers than if they had been allowed to vegetate in the school. (We don't have research findings that provide a basis for prediction.) But Mr. Illiano seems to be on stronger ground when he speaks about the impact on "borderline" students. When Mr. Clark expelled nonperforming troublemakers, he decreased their visibility as role models and simultaneously increased the visibility of more positive role models. This may be particularly crucial in an inner-city school where students interested in drugs may be as common as students interested in college.

The issue is a more general one. If American society is serious about high school education, keeping kids enrolled who have no interest in learning anything except how to torment teachers and who prevent other students from learning seems counterproductive. On the other hand, what should be done with such youngsters? If high schools were made voluntary and students were asked to justify by studious behavior the public expense of providing teachers and facilities for them, most students would continue to attend school as they do now. Students who must prove that they are learning something in order to take advantage of a free education will attend more regularly, pay more attention in class, and do more homework. They will also be more respectful to their teachers and more concerned with earning good grades. But the small minority of high school students who do not realize that schools are educational institutions, not recreation centers, would have to choose between getting an education and leaving school until they are ready to take learning seriously, although society should try to keep their educational options open by providing alternative learning settings for dropouts in the community or the workplace.

Enacting laws that make attendance at public high schools voluntary, as it is in Japan, should also be accompanied by strenuous efforts to motivate students to attend in their own self-interest. This done, teachers will have more enthusiasm for teaching and will be less

afraid to confront misbehaving students. Such a willingness on the part of teachers and will nip in the bud some of the everyday school violence that disorder encourages.

What about junior high schools and intermediate schools? The higher academic and behavioral standards that voluntary enrollment will make possible in high schools will eventually have a beneficial effect on lower secondary schools. Once all high schools have become voluntary, the other side of the coin is that students must meet their standards in order to be accepted and to remain enrolled. Junior-high-school students would face the problem of getting accepted at the high school of their choice (as they face it now in Japan). Teachers would be able to say to junior high school students, "If you do not learn what you are supposed to learn in junior high school, you will cut yourself off from later educational opportunities." This will decrease, although not eliminate discipline problems from junior high schools. The Japanese experience is instructive. Although Japanese junior high schools have more school violence than Japanese senior high schools, most Japanese junior high school students are too busy preparing for the examinations for high school admission to engage in disciplinary infractions.

If high school attendance was made voluntary in some individual states of the United States, even if only as an experiment, academic achievement would increase and everyday school violence would decrease in American high schools, but the improvement would be most marked in inner-city high schools where the proportion of academically engaged students is currently lowest.

INTRODUCING ADULT SUPPORTERS OF TEACHERS INTO HIGH SCHOOLS

There are already hints of the usefulness of increasing the presence of conventional adults in high schools. For example, Chicago's DuSable High School, an all-black school close to a notorious public housing project, demonstrated the practicality of offering the opportunity for repentant dropouts from the neighborhood to enroll as regular students (Wilkerson, 1993). A 39-year-old father of six children, a 29-year-old mother of a 14-year-old freshman at DuSable, a

39-year-old mother of five children hungered for a second chance at a high school education. They accepted the school district's invitation to return to DuSable High School because they had come to believe that dropping out a decade or two earlier had been a terrible mistake. Some of these adult students were embarrassed to meet their children in the hallways; some of their children were embarrassed that their parents were schoolmates; some of the teachers at the high school were initially skeptical about mixing teenagers and adults in classes. But everyone agreed that the adult students took education seriously, worked harder than the teenage students, and set a good example.

These adult students were not in school to bolster the authority of teachers. That was just a byproduct of their presence. Apparently, it is harder to cut classes or skip school altogether when your mother or even your neighbor is a fellow student. For instance, the principal at DuSable High School observed one mother marching her son off to gym class, which he had intended to cut. Most school systems shunt adult students into special adult school programs or G.E.D. classes, partly because work or child-care responsibilities make it difficult for the late awakeners to the value of education to come during the normal school day. But especially in inner-city high schools, much can be gained by encouraging even a handful of adult dropouts to return to regular high school classes. Teachers who have a serious adult student or two in their classes are not alone with a horde of teenagers. They have moral support for the academic enterprise.

The notion of introducing conventional adults into public schools in supportive roles has many precedents: graders to assist teachers in providing feedback on homework, mentors, tutors, crossing guards, volunteer or paid teacher-aides in the lower grades. Why am I touting adult as students as a more promising approach? True, I do not have research evidence in support of my suggestion, but, on the other hand, research evidence for the beneficial consequences of adults in these other roles is weak or non-existent. I recommend bringing adults into classes as students because I find it plausible to believe that they would influence youngsters in their classes by what they do and how they behave rather than the usual relationship between adults and

children, where adults are telling children what children ought to do. Of course, the effectiveness of this hypothesis should be tested systematically; the question is whether it is theoretically compelling enough to be worth testing.

Experienced educational administrators have pointed out that school bureaucracies fear that allowing parents in classrooms on a regular basis might interfere with their prerogatives or prove disruptive or both and that teachers are also wary of parents. Part of the value of research will be to establish whether these anxieties can be quelled by experience with an ongoing adult presence in secondary schools. Even if such a presence would prove very useful, it is conceivable that these fears, rational or irrational, would prove an insurmountable obstacle to the introduction of adult students into classrooms.

CROWDING OUT THE SUBSTANCE-ABUSE CURRICULUM

I assume that American society cannot make the drug curriculum unattractive to all students. (Much of what I will say applies to alcohol as well as to illegal drugs, but alcohol presents a more difficult test of the crowding-out strategy because, being a legal substance for adults, use of alcohol by high school students carries less stigma. Consequently youngsters use it more extensively than they do other substances.) Thus, a substantial minority of students in all schools and a majority in some schools will be attracted to the drug curriculum. The crowding-out strategy assumes that it may be possible to make competing curricula more attractive than they are now and, thereby, to reduce the relative attractiveness of drug involvement.

An obvious possibility is to involve students in activities that drain off energy and time so that the drug curriculum loses out in competition with them. Extracurricular clubs and athletic teams are not designed to compete with drugs intentionally, but, even in the absence of much systematic research, educators fervently believe that they drain off energy and commitment that might otherwise move into substance-abuse or delinquent channels.

An even more attractive possibility for educators is to involve all students -- not just those in college preparatory or honors classes --

in academically demanding activities that would crowd out substance-abuse or delinquent tendencies. For example, the average number of hours of homework done by students each week in public high schools in the United States is much less than the average number of hours of homework done by private high school students (Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore, 1982: 104). And by comparison with Japanese high school students, American students do hardly any homework at all (Rohlen, 1983). So there is considerable room for increasing the amount of homework expected of public high school students. The most important reason for doing so is academic. Studies have shown a strong relationship between student achievement and the number of hours a week students spend on homework (Wahlberg, 1985). But an incidental effect might well be to reduce drug use.

It should not surprise anyone that students who do more homework, on the average, than their classmates are less likely to use drugs. What would be worth knowing, however, is whether increasing requirements for homework in a school will decrease the likelihood of drug use for the average student. Conceivably, those students prone to use drugs will not conform to more demanding academic requirements -- and that therefore the average amount of homework done in a school could increase without an effect on drug behavior. On the other hand, it is possible that most students, including those prone to use drugs, will increase their academic commitments in response to teacher demands and concomitantly avoid or at least reduce drug use. This hypothesis needs to be tested by careful research; the critical question is whether students who do more homework and get higher grades are detoured away from drugs or whether students who are into drugs care less about getting good grades and do less homework.

It is not easy to motivate students to work hard in school. Nevertheless, it may be easier to motivate students to get more involved in academic goals than to tackle drug prevention more directly, as I imply in my analysis of efforts to create "schools without drugs" in Appendix B. Assigning additional homework is of course worthwhile for purely academic reasons, but its byproduct might be to deflect interest away from drugs. How practical this approach would be to drug

prevention is once again an empirical question the answer to which can only be gained by careful research.

Just as requiring more homework may have the incidental effect of competing with the drug curriculum, so may monitoring attendance more carefully and penalizing truancy more effectively. The primary reason for insisting on good attendance is that without regular attendance learning suffers. But if good attendance can be coerced, it also tends to crowd out drug interests.

Part-time student employment can under some circumstances compete with the drug curriculum for student commitment and under other circumstances promote substance abuse. Part-time employment is not always character-building, although "work" has traditionally had that reputation. For example, the large longitudinal study referred to earlier (Steinberg, 1996) found that high school students who worked more than 15 hours a week performed worse academically than students who worked less or not at all. However, a moderate amount of part-time work in high school, as is involved in work-study programs that already exist in many high schools, may enable some students to have a socializing experience: a way to meet conventional people, to learn to subordinate the pleasures of the moment to long-range objectives, and, perhaps most important of all, to obtain a different type of success than the type obtainable by achievement in academic subjects. Furthermore, it makes a great deal of difference whether part-time work is being used to enable a youngster to run a car or to support a taste for drugs or whether part-time work is a chance to save money for a college education. Unfortunately, the Steinberg study did not differentiate the effect of student employment on students who were working to save for college or to contribute support to their families from the effect on students who were working to maximize present consumption. If research can demonstrate that some ways of structuring the part-time work experience are more effective than others at crowding out potential interest in drugs, a program might be developed -- this would require new legislation -- in which state or federal governments matched the earnings being saved for post-secondary education in special bank accounts not subject to income tax until withdrawn. By providing an

incentive to refrain from using for current gratifications at least part of one's earnings from work, such a program would subtly be teaching an alternative to the hedonism implicit in the drug curriculum.

3. CONCLUSION

At the present time we take "no" for an answer in the inner cities, albeit reluctantly, and have high dropout rates. If we become as successful at dropout prevention in the cities as we have been in middle-class suburbs, the result may be more catastrophic violence such as occurred in Littleton in addition to the everyday low-level violence already endemic in inner-city high schools.

Compatible with this speculation is the consistent gap between the rates of violent student victimizations in public junior and senior high schools. In 1976, when data for the nation-wide Safe Schools study was being collected, the rate of violent victimizations in junior high schools was twice as high as the rate of violent victimizations in senior high schools (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1978, p. B-13). In 1989 and 1995 the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that violent victimizations continued to occur at twice the rate in junior as in senior high schools (Bastian and Taylor, 1991; Chandler et al., 1998, p. 13). A plausible interpretation of this gap is that the lower rate of violent victimizations in the senior high schools is due to the dropping out of the most anti-social kids when they could legally do so because the social pressure to remain until graduation is not as strong as it is in middle-class suburbs like Littleton.

Why not allow youngsters to choose when they wish to pursue education at the high school level (Toby, 1987)? By making high school attendance voluntary, high schools will become safer places in which it is easier to compete with the substance-abuse curriculum of some peer groups. In addition, the increased presence of conventional adults with an obvious commitment to education will demonstrate symbolically that American society is really serious about education, not just about incarcerating teenagers daily in buildings called schools.

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APPENDIX A

Table 1

**Post-Secondary Aspirations of New Jersey High School Students,
by Self-Reported Grades, 1995**

<u>GOAL</u>	Mostly A's	Mostly B's	Mostly C's	Mostly D's and F's
Two Year College	6.4% (17)	43.5% (118)	46.8% (127)	3.3% (9)
Four Year College	26.2% (466)	53.8% (958)	18.6% (331)	1.4% (25)
Technical Training	7.4% (10)	38.0% (52)	45.6% (62)	9.0% (12)
Job Only	2.9% (1)	38.6% (14)	53.0% (19)	5.5% (2)
Military	3.4% (4)	37.3% (40)	53.6% (57)	5.7% (6)
Other	6.4% (6)	43.0% (39)	44.2% (40)	6.4% (6)
Don't Know	6.3% (16)	31.6% (80)	49.3% (125)	12.8% (33)

Source: Fisher, Wayne S., *Drug and Alcohol: Use among New Jersey High School Students*, Trenton, New Jersey: N. J. Department of Law and Public Safety, 1996, p. 67, and an unpublished tabulation.

Table 2

Per Cent Substance Users Among New Jersey High School Students Planning to Attend a Four-year College, by Self-Reported Grades

	(Percent Using in the Past Year)								
	Alcohol	Mari-	Hallu-	Cocaine	Ampheta-	Tranquil	Barbi-	Inhal	Glue
		juana	cinogens		mines	izers	turates		ants
Mostly A's N=466	63.7%	21.8%	4.2%	2.5%	2.4%	2.6%	1.2%	9.0%	2.8%
Mostly B's N=958	73.5%	33.6%	10.6%	3.7%	6.5%	4.6%	2.9%	16.3%	4.4%
Mostly C's N=331	72.0%	44.9%	10.5%	4.7%	9.1%	5.4%	2.7%	16.4%	5.3%
Mostly D's and F's N=25	64.0%	65.2%	37.1%	29.4%	14.5%	14.2%	18.2%	46.0%	34.8%

Source: Unpublished tabulation provided by Dr. Wayne S. Fisher and Christine M. Boyle, New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice from a 1995 survey of the substance use of New Jersey 10th, 11th and 12th graders in public schools.

Table 3

Per Cent Substance Users Among New Jersey High School Students Not Planning to Attend a Four-year College, by Self-Reported Grades

(Percent Using in the Past Year)

	Alcohol	Mari- juana	Hallucin- ogens	Cocaine	Ampheta- mines	Tranquil- izers	Barbitu- rates	Inhal ants	Glue
Mostly A's	59.1%	43.4%	20.1%	14.0%	14.0%	15.9%	12.4%	17.1%	16.0%
N=54									
Mostly B's	71.4%	35.5%	12.8%	5.7%	6.8%	5.7%	4.0%	16.1%	5.7%
N=343									
Mostly C's	76.9%	47.2%	19.4%	9.4%	9.0%	5.7%	6.3%	22.9%	9.5%
N=430									
Mostly D's and F's	85.0%	69.7%	34.0%	23.1%	25.1%	22.4%	19.4%	30.5%	20.4%
N=68									

Source: Unpublished tabulation provided by Dr. Wayne S. Fisher and Christine M. Boyle, New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice from a 1995 survey of the substance use of New Jersey 10th, 11th and 12th graders in public schools.

Appendix B

AN ANALYSIS OF SOME SCHOOL PROGRAMS TO CURB DRUG USE

On June 9, 1987, Secretary of Education William Bennett testified before the Select Committee on Narcotic Abuse and Control of the House of Representatives during a hearing on "Drug Abuse Prevention in America's Schools" (Select Committee on Narcotic Abuse and Control, 1987, pp. 41-46). He cited a 1986 publication of the Department of Education, *What Works: Schools Without Drugs*, as exemplifying effective school anti-drug programs that were based on sound research, and proudly reported that the Department had distributed a million and a half copies of the report to every school in the United States. Furthermore, he wrangled with the Committee about its eagerness to give larger amounts of money for drug prevention in the schools than the Department felt could be spent effectively. My reading of *What Works: Schools Without Drugs* reinforces my previous impression that the strategies underlying what the Department described as "exemplary programs" were theoretically fuzzy. A better title of the booklet might have been: "Programs that seem to have succeeded but we don't know exactly why."

In this appendix to my paper I will show how I arrived at this conclusion. What are the main strategies implicit in programs to prevent or arrest substance abuse among the young? Essentially, there are four:

1. Disseminating scientifically correct information at school about the effects of alcohol and drugs on those who use them. If young people know how bad these effects are and if they are rational, they will avoid such costly missteps.
2. Providing services of various sorts to help youngsters cope better with the psychological problems underlying substance abuse.
3. Preventing young people from gaining ready access to alcohol or drugs, thus precluding abuse regardless of motivation.
4. Threatening legal or informal penalties severe enough so that youngsters will avoid alcohol or drugs for fear of possible

consequences. This category includes threats from the criminal justice system, particularly the police, but also efforts to persuade parents to supervise children more closely and policies of school districts to suspend or expel substance abusers or drug sellers.

Consider the first strategy: disseminating correct information about drugs and alcohol at school. Certainly it is important that young people realize the dangers in alcohol and drug use. However, it is not immediately obvious that schools are needed to deliver this message. After all, the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse are staples of television and film dramas. True, youngsters who report in national surveys greater use of drugs and alcohol are more likely to report lesser awareness of the risks (Johnston, O'Malley, and Bachman, 1986). But this does not mean that they have not been told the risks, only that they do not believe that the risks are great. Some may disbelieve the warnings of parents and teachers on the general principle that those over 30 cannot be trusted to tell the truth. Others -- under the illusion of personal immortality -- may believe that drugs and alcohol pose dangers to others but that they can handle such substances.

And even if information deficits needed to be remedied, are schools likely to be successful in remedying them? Fifty years ago, Professor Robin Williams of Cornell University published a comprehensive survey of the effects of school courses on stereotypes of ethnic and racial minorities (Williams, 1947). He concluded that "the mere giving of objective general information in print or by lecture about a group which is the object of hostility has only a slight effect, or no effect, in reducing hostility -- at least in the short run." Although the analogy between information about substance abuse and information about minorities is only a rough one, it seems plausible that teachers would face the same problem: alternative sources of information. When the child observes alcohol use in the family and in the peer group, he or she receives a message that may contradict the message being taught in the classroom.

The second strategy, attempting to address the underlying problems to which substance abuse is a response, rests on two dubious assumptions. The first is that drug and alcohol abuse by adolescents is a response to personal problems for the relief of which adolescents adopt self-administered medication. They smoke marihuana, snort cocaine, inject heroin, or are chronically drunk in order to relieve their pain. In short, substance abuse is driven by deep, largely unconscious problems. This assumption is seldom stated explicitly and therefore is not examined in the light of research evidence. What would be necessary to establish (if the unconscious-pain assumption is empirically correct) is that substance abusers had worse personal problems before they began to use drugs or alcohol at all. Once use begins, difficulties of all kinds are likely to result: inability to perform well at school, loss of jobs, conflict with parents, nutritional deficiencies, financial problems. Consequently, what is cause and what effect becomes unclear.

The unconscious-pain assumption is also used to explain adolescent suicide (Toby, 1987a). Those who kill themselves or who attempt to kill themselves are assumed to be suffering more, on the average, than those who do not try to end their problems so dramatically. Despite its surface plausibility, another interpretation of the facts than unconscious pain is possible. Even if those who kill themselves are objectively no worse off, on the average, than those who don't, they may desire death because subjectively they define suicide as an appropriate solution. One of the founding fathers of sociology, Emile Durkheim, demonstrated that Protestants are more likely to commit suicide than Catholics (Durkheim, 1951). Durkheim did not believe that Protestants led worse lives, on the average, than Catholics. However, the Protestant religious tradition guides suffering individuals in an activistic direction in situations where the Catholic religious tradition counsels resignation. Another way of putting this point is to say that the dependent variable, suicidal behavior, is less strongly related to the independent variable, suffering, than to another independent variable, the individual's ideas and values.

The same logic applies to substance abuse, and there is some confirmatory statistical data. A generation ago, in a classic study, Professor Robert Bales found that Irish-Americans had high rates of alcohol abuse and Jewish-Americans low rates (Bales, 1969). Bales could not find evidence -- and he did not think it was plausible to believe -- that the Irish had more serious underlying problems, on the average, than the Jews. Instead he concluded that Irish culture is more compatible with using alcohol to solve whatever personal problems arise than is the Jewish culture.

Another factor that helps to explain suicide also helps to explain substance abuse. Those who have the means of killing themselves readily available -- lethal weapons or poisons -- have high suicide rates. Thus, policemen, soldiers, physicians, and pharmacists have high suicide rates. It seems more plausible to explain their high suicide rates as due to the ready availability of the means of self-destruction than to greater problems that members of these occupational categories endure. But if this is true, their motivation for self-destruction cannot run deep. Otherwise why would it be influenced by the happenstance of the availability of weapons or poisons? A parallel argument can be made about drug and alcohol abuse. The reason they are more prevalent in urban schools than in rural schools is that alcohol and drugs are easier for adolescents to obtain in urban areas, not that urban adolescents have more intense personal problems. Of course, the availability of drugs and alcohol depends on one's family, one's peer group, and one's school as well as on whether one lives in an urban or rural community.

The strategy to reduce student substance abuse by mounting school programs to address the problems to which substance abuse is presumed to be a response rests on a second dubious assumption: that schools are capable of remediating these underlying problems. Suppose that substance abuse is a coping mechanism for dealing with parental rejection, school failure, unpopularity with peers, or even poverty (and the low self-esteem that such life problems produce). Schools can probably improve the academic skills of motivated students. But it is implausible that schools can improve family functioning much or find a formula for transforming unpopular into popular youngsters.

The third strategy, preventing young people from gaining ready access to alcohol or drugs, operates on the situational level rather than on the level of motivation. Community programs that use this strategy against alcohol "include ordinances to control the number and types of retail outlets where alcohol can be purchased..., education and monitoring of retail clerks and retail outlet owners, training of servers in bars and restaurants..., and, most recently, crackdown on the availability of bogus I.D. cards" (Klitzner, 1987: 20). Unfortunately, studies of community-based programs to control availability of alcohol have been unable to demonstrate effectiveness -- except for the effectiveness of increases in the minimum purchase age and price increases, both of which have been found to be associated with reduced consumption of alcohol and a lower incidence of arrest for driving while intoxicated. Police efforts to disrupt drug sales or interdict the drug traffic rest on this strategy of reducing availability and thereby reducing consumption (Reuter, 1985; Zimmer, 1987). So do school efforts to prevent students from merchandising drugs.

Operation SPECDA (School Program to Educate and Control Drug Abuse) is a cooperative program of the New York City Board of Education and the police department. It operates in 545 schools, serving students and their parents from kindergarten through grade 12.... Police help provide classes and presentations on drug abuse in the schools. At the same time, they concentrate enforcement efforts within a two-block radius of schools to create a drug-free corridor for students.

The enforcement aspect has had some impressive victories. Police have made 12,500 arrests to date, 61 percent in the vicinity of elementary schools. In addition, they have seized narcotics valued at more than \$2.7 million, as well as \$1.4 million in cash and 231 firearms (U.S. Department of Education, 1986: 37).

Note that the effectiveness of the war on drugs by police and by schools is difficult to measure directly by reduced consumption. Drug arrests or drug seizures are the indirect "evidence" of effectiveness.

The fourth strategy, threatening legal penalties or suspensions and expulsions, seems to have succeeded in some schools. However, while schools that have cracked down on drug use and sales have become

relatively free of drugs, this success may have been obtained partly by extruding from the school students who, as non-students, continued their drug involvements. Furthermore, the negative sanctions are usually imposed along with other measures. Thus, in the following accounts from *What Works: Schools without Drugs* (U.S. Department of Education, 1986: 149 20, 22, 28, 34), successful programs are described in different terms depending on features chosen for emphasis by the analyst:

1. The case of Northside High School, Atlanta, Georgia, is intended to illustrate what parents can do by supervising their children's activities.

Northside High School enrolls 1,300 students from 52 neighborhoods. In 1977, drug use was so prevalent that the school was known as "Fantasy Island." Students smoked marijuana openly at school, and police were called to the school regularly.

The combined efforts of a highly committed group of parents and an effective new principal succeeded in solving Northside's drug problem. Determined to stop drug use both inside and outside the school, parents organized and took the following actions:

- Formed parent-peer groups to learn about the drug problem and agreed to set curfews, to chaperone parties, and to monitor their children's whereabouts. They held community meetings to discuss teenage drug use with law enforcement agents, judges, clergy, and physicians.
- Established a coalition that lobbied successfully for State antidrug and antiparaphernalia laws.
- Offered assistance to the schools. The school acted on the parents' recommendations to provide drug prevention education to teachers, update its prevention curriculum, and establish a new behavior code. Parents also helped design a system for monitoring tardiness and provided volunteer help to teachers.

The new principal, Bill Rudolph, also committed his energy and expertise to fighting the drug problem. Rudolph established a tough policy for students who were caught possessing or dealing drugs. "Illegal drug offenses do not lead to detention hall but to court," he stated. When students were caught, he immediately called the police and then notified

their parents. Families were given the names of drug education programs and were urged to participate. One option available to parents was drug education offered by other parents.

Today, Northside is a different school. In 1985-1986, only three drug-related incidents were reported. Academic achievement has improved dramatically; student test scores have risen every year since the 1977-1978 school year. Scores on standardized achievement tests rose to well above the national average, placing Northside among the top schools in the district for the 1985-1986 school year.

2. The case of the Anne Arundel County School District, Annapolis, Maryland, is intended to illustrate one of the measures schools can take as contrasted with what parents can do. In particular it is recommended that schools "establish clear and specific rules regarding drug use that includes strong corrective actions."

In response to evidence of a serious drug problem in 1979-1980, the school district of Anne Arundel County implemented a strict new policy covering both elementary and secondary students. It features notification of police, involvement of parents, and use of alternative education programs for offenders. School officials take the following steps when students are found using or possessing drugs.

- The school notifies the police, calls the parents, and suspends students for 1 to 5 school days.
- The special assistant to the superintendent meets with the students and parents. In order to return to school, students must state where and how they obtained the drugs. The students must also agree either to participate in the district's Alternative Drug Program at night, while attending school during the day, or to enroll in the district's Learning Center (grades 7-8) or evening high school (grades 9-12). Students, accompanied by their parents must also take at least 5 hours of counseling. Parents are also required to sign a Drug/Alcohol Reinstatement Form.
- If students fail to complete the Alternative Drug Program, they are transferred to the Learning Center or to evening high school.
- Students are expelled if caught using or possessing drugs a second time.

Distribution and sale of drugs are also grounds for expulsion, and a student expelled for these offenses is ineligible to participate in the Alternative Drug Program.

As a result of these steps, the number of drug offenses has declined by 60 percent, from 507 in 1979-1980 to 202 in 1985-1986.

3. The case of Eastside High School in Paterson, New Jersey, is also intended to illustrate the effect of school policy on drug abuse. However, the emphasis seems to be on enforcement of the policy and particularly on the role of security measures.

Eastside High School is located in an inner-city neighborhood and enrolls 3,000 students. Before 1982, drug dealing was rampant. Intruders had easy access to the school and sold drugs on the school premises. Drugs were used in school stairwells and bathrooms. Gangs armed with razors and knives roamed the hallways.

A new principal, Joe Clark, was instrumental in ridding the school of drugs and violence. Hired in 1982, Clark established order, enlisted the help of police officers in drug prevention education, and raised academic standards. Among the actions he took were:

- Establishing and enforcing strict penalties for breaking the discipline code. In reference to drugs, he stated emphatically, "If you're smoking or dealing, you're out." He acted on his warning, removing 300 students from the roll in his first year for discipline and drug-related violations.
- Increasing the involvement of local police officers known as the "Brothers in Blue," who visited the school regularly to speak to students about the importance of resisting drugs.
- Raising academic standards and morale by emphasizing the importance of doing well, requiring a "C" average for participation in athletics, and honoring student achievements.

As a result of actions such as these, Eastside has been transformed. Today there is no evidence of drug use in the school. Intruders no longer have access to the school; hallways and stairwells are safe. Academic performance has improved substantially: in 1981-1982, only 56 percent of the 9th graders passed the State basic skills test in math; in 1985-1986, 89 percent passed. In reading, the percentage of 9th graders passing the State basic skills test rose from 40 percent in 1981-1982 to 67 percent in 1985-1986.

4. The case of Samuel Gompers Vocational-Technical High School in New York City is intended to illustrate reaching out to the community for support and assistance in making the school's anti-drug policy work.

Samuel Gompers Vocational-Technical High School is located in the South Bronx in New York City. Enrollment is 1,500 students; 95 percent are from low-income families.

In June, 1977, an article in the *New York Times* likened Gompers to a "war zone." Students smoked marijuana and sold drugs both inside the school and on the school grounds; the police had to be called in daily.

In 1979, the school board hired a principal, Victor Herbert, who turned the school around. Herbert established order, implemented a drug awareness program, involved the private sector, and instilled pride in the school among students. Among the actions he took:

- In cooperation with the police captain, Herbert arranged for the same two police officers to respond to all calls from Gompers. These officers came to know the Gompers students; eventually, students confided in the police about drug sales occurring near the school. Police also helped school staff patrol the school grounds and were stationed at a nearby park known for drug trafficking.
- Herbert stationed security guards and faculty outside each bathroom. He organized "hall sweeps" in the middle of class periods and no longer allowed students to leave the premises at lunch time.
- Herbert established a drug education program for teachers, students, and parents that emphasized recognizing the signs of drug use. He also implemented other drug awareness programs that involved the police and community organizations.
- He persuaded companies, such as IBM, to hire students for after-school and summer work. Students had to be drug free to-participate. This requirement demonstrated to students that employers would not tolerate drug use.
- A computerized attendance system was installed to notify parents of their child's absence. Newly hired paraprofessionals, called "family assistants," worked to locate absentees and bring them back to school.

The results of these actions were remarkable. The current principal, Gregory Bettantone, reports that in 1986 there were no known incidents of students using alcohol or drugs in school or on school grounds and only one-incident of violence. The percentage of students reading at or above grade level increased from 45 percent in 1979-80 to 67 percent in 1984-85.

5. The case of Greenway Middle School in Phoenix, Arizona, is also intended to illustrate what communities can do to control drugs in schools but more from a preventive angle.

Greenway Middle School is in a rapidly growing area of Phoenix. The student population of 1,000 is highly transient.

Greenway developed a comprehensive drug prevention program in the 1979-80 school year. The program provides strict sanctions for students caught with drugs, but its main emphasis is on prevention. Features include:

- Teaching students about drugs in science classes; mini-units on why people use drugs and what treatment resources are available to drug users; distributing and discussing current literature on drugs; sponsoring a 1-day Prevention Fair in which community experts talk to students about drug prevention.
- Enrolling students and staff in the "All Star" training program where they learn how to resist peer pressure, make decisions for themselves, and develop plans for personal and school improvement.
- Providing counselor training for specially selected students; drug counseling for students who are using drugs.

Under Greenway's drug policy, first-time offenders who are caught using or possessing drugs are suspended for 6 to 10 days. First-time offenders who are caught selling drugs are subject to expulsion. The policy is enforced in close cooperation with the local police department.

As a result of the Greenway program, drug use and disciplinary referrals declined dramatically between 1979-80 and 1985-86. The number of drug-related referrals to the school's main office decreased by 90 percent; overall, discipline-related referrals decreased by 70 percent.

These five "successful" programs differ. Maybe they are different in their kinds of success as well as in the elements composing them. For example, it is not the same sort of success if fewer students were attracted to drug activities in the later period than were attracted in the earlier period or if the same students used drugs in the later period but less extensively or if the new policies made anti-social students so uncomfortable that they left for other schools or dropped out of school altogether. None of the five exemplary programs seems to have been evaluated systematically so it is difficult to characterize "success" specifically. Nor is it clear which elements of multi-faceted programs were responsible for whatever effects did occur. In Northside High School, parents agreed to set curfews, to chaperone parties, and to monitor their children's whereabouts." Certainly, all parents did not participate -- if Northside is like other schools. Furthermore, students more likely to abuse substances are also less likely to have parents who have controlled them in the past and are capable of controlling them in the future, even if motivated to do so. Why then should parental efforts have produced such dramatic results at Northside? Maybe the threat of the principal -- "Illegal drug offenses do not lead to detention hall but to court" -- was more important than the participation of some parents.

In the Anne Arundel County school system, the threat was not legal sanctions but notification of parents and suspension or expulsion. There is also mention of a requirement of five hours of counseling for students, accompanied by their parents, before suspended students are permitted to return to school. However, the account does not say what happened if the parents or the students or both failed to follow through. Did the suspension turn into an expulsion? What proportion of students suspended for drug offenses in the Anne Arundel County school system took their punishment, returned to school, and sinned no more?

In Eastside High School, as in Anne Arundel County, suspensions and expulsions are part of the effort to turn the school around, but mention is also made of honoring student academic achievements and of requiring a "C" average for participation in athletics. Did the academic emphasis make an important contribution? And how about the involvement of local

police officers ("Brothers in Blue")? Could Principal Clark have succeeded without them by relying on security guards?

In Samuel Gompers High School, suspensions and expulsions are not mentioned at all. However, police cooperation is also cited as an important part of the war against drugs. Presumably the police made arrests. The same two police officers are assigned to answering calls for assistance from Gompers as the result of an agreement between Principal Louis and the precinct captain. The students got to know those officers and to give them tips about sellers of drugs. As part of their duties the officers help patrol the school as well as a nearby park where drug transactions take place. However, another feature of the Gompers program is an employment incentive. Drug-free students are hired for after-school and summer work. In addition, a computerized attendance system notified parents of the absence of their children? Were the enforcement features or the incentives more important?

In the Greenway Middle School, suspension, expulsion, and unspecified action by the police await students caught with drugs, although most of the account concerns a variety of informational and counseling programs. It is at least possible that the strict sanctions rather than the educational program is what keeps the school relatively drug free.

In effect, in all five cases principals came into schools that were out of control and did *everything* they could think of to restore order and get rid of drugs. They were more interested in producing results than in knowing which of a variety of measures worked better. But if only one measure produced results, it would be useful to know this -- both for scientific reasons and to prevent resources from being wasted in attempting to replicate the entire package of measures. On the other hand, if no measure would have produced results in the absence of an interactive impact with the other five, this is important to know too.

They are crucial questions because drug problems at school may be imported into the school from the environing community where they are pervasive or they can arise in the school without being influenced by a high level of community drug use. In the first situation, probably typified by Eastside High School in Paterson, New Jersey, and Samuel

Gompers Vocational-Technical High School in New York City, the principals certainly had to get control of the drug problem in their schools. Unless they did, education could not have continued. But whether they succeeded in reducing the incidence of drug use among their students is another question. Possibly students who used drugs or sold drugs in school shifted to using or selling drugs **outside of** school when the school principals at Eastside High School and Gompers applied pressure. The criminological literature talks about "displacement" effects, and there is a lively controversy about the conditions under which reducing criminal behavior in one neighborhood increases it in another.

Presumably, displacement effects are less likely to occur in situations where the drug problem is much more serious in schools than in the neighborhoods from which students come. Once the use and sale of drugs are controlled at school, students cannot easily substitute drug activities in the neighborhood. Furthermore, if drug use is not legitimated in the community, the delegitimation of drug use in school is more likely to affect out-of-school behavior. These sound like plausible conjectures, but no one really knows. That is why research is needed to establish not only how much of various illicit substances students use but whether their patterns of drug use reflects the drug problem of the community or whether they reflect conditions intrinsic to the school. For similar reasons, research is needed to establish whether students began using drugs on the streets and then transferred their activities to schools or whether they developed receptive attitudes toward drugs in school -- and perhaps began to experiment with them there. The formal curriculum does not, of course, encourage students to use drugs. To the contrary, the message, "Say 'no' to drugs," is taught by teachers. But a furtive drug curriculum may exist in which students teach one another the desirability of various forbidden pleasures.

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